

This Old House

29
Gifts
for DIYers
from \$5

37 Great Finds for your home

mantel kits * tile bargains * magic potions
* unique lighting * repro hardware
* secret online sources

Get a
fireplace
like this
p. 57



DECEMBER 2008 THISOLDHOUSE.COM

GMC
SIERRA

WE STARED FUEL EFFICIENCY IN THE EYE.
FUEL EFFICIENCY BLINKED.



When it comes to gas mileage, the Sierra XFE is tough to beat. With unsurpassed fuel economy compared to any other V8 truck* and up to 5-40 highway miles per tank, the Sierra XFE goes longer than you ever thought possible without batting an eye. It's the Sierra XFE, from GMC. Engineering that happens when you never say never. **WE ARE PROFESSIONAL GRADE.**

*Based on 2007 EPA fuel economy estimates for full-line V8 trucks. Actual mileage may vary. Always wear your seat belt. ©2007 GM Corp. All rights reserved. GMC, the GMC logo and Sierra are trademarks of GM Corp.



Every home
is full of stories.
Every story
has a highlight.



What's your story?

At The Home Depot, we have everything you need to make your home shine. From lighting to home decor, we have it all.

REjuvenation

CLASSIC AMERICAN LIGHTING & HOME PARTS

december 2008 | CONTENTS

features

64 From Carriage House to Cozy Home

A 1950s suburban's four-bay garage helped drive a couple's vision for an open-plan vintage home

72 Secret Sources '08

The TCH guide to products and services you won't find at the home-center

82 Repair or Replace

Fix it or blow it up? Or just? Maybe it's time to shop for a replacement. Same tips on how to decide

86 "Our Friends Told Us We Were Crazy"

Transforming a dilapidated Florida house with factory-made, perfect pieces to the contractor reaches wife

90 Artisan Tile With Style

Tour the artist's ceramics factory to glimpse their unique way with clay



64



90



Pick up a couple of wrenches and some cartridges, or spring for a whole new faucet? TCH does the math on some common repairs.



ON THE COVER

25, 16, 18, 22, 24, 40

Gifts for Christmas

87 Get the best

32 Great home finds

82 Our regular or

replace guide

Cover photograph by

Woodward & Lothrop

By the Editors



in every issue

THIS MONTH ONLINE 11
FROM THIS OLD HOUSE 12 | MAIL 17

around the house

25 **Holiday gift guide** | Make your house
guest-friendly | Remodeler's new realities

departments

26 **Kitchen Design**
A 1980s cookery show goes with the
flow of modern Arts and Crafts home

30 **Bath Design**
A vintage style eco-friendly redo
echoes its surroundings

35 **Around My House**
He says, "I can't feel it." She wants a pro.
A couple's home repair showdown

39 **TOOTHY**
Older materials and workshop wonders
give a new home a lot to love

43 **Green House**
A wind turbine helps lower an Ohio
home's energy costs

46 **How It Works**
Decide if fire sprinklers are right for you

49 **Toolbox**
Clean roof tools you don't need but
will want to own

57 **Step by Step**
Enhance your fireplace with surround

112 **Save This Old House**
High-end modern 1930 Gothic
Revival regains its charm

workshop

97 **Ask This Old House**
Cordless tools—is the price right?
Tubular longfiles, cutting oil,
test wire, sink drains, radon Q & A

106 **Owner's Notebook**
The TGH reader expert is back for
keeping your power tools running

108 **Directory**
Find the products and services
featured in this issue

Time meanings,
stocking stuffers,
holiday helpers, and more.
Gear up with our
Valentine gift guide

15



26



35



39



57

**INTRODUCING
DURACELL
DAYLITE**

**THE NEW FLASHLIGHT
POWERFUL ENOUGH TO
TURN NIGHT INTO DAY.**

You can get a heavier flashlight.

You can get a bigger flashlight.

But only Duracell can give you
this kind of brightness.

That's because The Duracell Daylite is
the only flashlight with TrueBeam Optics...

the revolutionary system that combines
LED technology with precision focus lensing...
for incredibly bright, white, even light with no
black spots — all housed in a durable metal body.

New Duracell Daylite. Turn night into Day.

duracell.com/daylite

⊕ TRUS+ED EVERYWHERE ⊖





Many, many buttons
for him to push.

The LG SteamWasher™ with Allerguard™ cycle is proven to reduce common household allergens from your fabrics, so you can rest assured knowing the clothes you wear aren't wearing anything themselves.



thisoldhouse.com

House

DIY PROJECTS

HOME TOURS

DIY TIPS

THE LATEST

KEEP
WARM



1. Fix the
Furnace
2. Insulate
the Attic
3. Fire Up the
Pellet Stove
and 50+ more
projects for a toasty
winter home

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

25 Gifts for
Under \$25

Small-Space
Entertaining

Xmas Tree
Alternatives

and dozens more
NEW ideas for a
season of celebration



The latest
innovations in
appliances
from the people
you've always
turned to
for technology
Best Buy.®

The LG SteamWasher.™



BestBuy.com



You. Happier.™

FIND IT ALL IN ONE CLICK:
thisoldhouse.com/shortcuts

Tell them they're little, shiny,
round, historic action figures.



THE 2008 UNITED STATES MINT PROOF SET® IS HERE. JUST \$24.95

Imagine the superheroes of our Nation on deep-mirrored backgrounds in sharp relief. Pristine examples of mint craftsmanship sealed in special display cases, these extraordinarily brilliant coins are a great way to commemorate a birthday or other milestone. Best of all, they'll keep these action figures for years.

FOR GENUINE UNITED STATES MINT PRODUCTS,
VISIT WWW.USMINT.GOV OR CALL 1.800.USA.MINT.



GENUINELY WORTHWHILE



UNITED STATES MINT

©2008 United States Mint

letter FROM THIS OLD HOUSE

Ho-Ho...Yikes!

THE OVERGROWN MADE A HOOFUL GROOM in the December wind. My wife and I had been wandering this patch of trees for what seemed like hours. It was frosty and growing dark. I could feel her icy-cold hand through her woolen mittens. Suddenly the wind halted with one last dying gasp. Then we heard it: Hoar—snow crunching under heavy boots at a slow, labored pace. My heart was pounding. He had us not.

The crunching grew louder. I held my breath, and my wife drove her fingertips into the palm of my hand. We stood as still as two tracks. Crunch! Crunch! The pounding mystery was there! He stood no more than two yards away, between the reaching branches of a pair of Douglas firs, his back to us.

There was only one thing we could do. My wife and I looked at each other, crouched, and roared forward. We landed for measure to the ground!

"Tag, you're it!"

Grinning, my brother rolled over in the snow. And my mother, standing nearby, looked at me with that look that said, How can my adult children be so juvenile? Getting to be hot, as still as lead, my snow-covered brother said, "You done playing games? Come on, I found the tree."

This is my favorite part of the holidays: going to a Christmas tree farm with my brothers and nephews and nieces, searching all day for just the right tree, hanging it home, and going out the lights. Unwinding the lights. Gearing tangled in the lights. Getting so tangled in the lights, I caught with one wrong move and up hanging myself.

"Tis the season, and all..."

Perhaps you have a similar tradition with your family—the tree-chopping, not the hanging. At *This Old House* we have traditions too. One of them is our annual "Secret Souvenir" lot, which this year is hotter than ever, clock-fall of the most special products and services a homeowner could hope to find. We've got a dozen or so pages of great gifts and home tips that we hope will make your holidays a little happier. And 19 of the coolest ornaments I've ever seen are on page 15. In fact, they're ones I'd love to hang on my own tree. I just need to get myself out of this tangle of lights, which...hmm...maybe I'm gonna need to cut off just need to find someone with a scissors. Or maybe an ax...

Sam Chamberlain
SENIOR ORNAMENTAL EDITOR



Three things you'll learn
from this month's *TDH*

Why a Swiss Army knife
can cost \$1,400 P. 49

Which salad-dressing ingredient
makes an instant old house. P. 99

Where to get \$30 art tile
for only five bucks. P. 90

In the October issue, *The Old House* shed light on CFLs, featured advice from homeowners on how they save energy dollars, and passed out awards to the biggest (and then some) losers in home improvement. Here's what readers like you had to say about these and other stories:

It's Your CFL Problem Solved "we offered lots of advice on using compact fluorescent lightbulbs indoors, but we suggested that you avoid using them outside. Well, as it turned out,

Green Light, No Waiting

After reading "Your CFL Problem Solved," I wanted to let you know that I found CFLs designed for motion-detecting lights. They are called "instant on" CFLs. I thought a few of us were, though I was skeptical of the bulb at first. For a few months now I've been using them, and I can say they really turn on instantly and are very bright.

—KATHY HANCOCK, WYOMING

CFL Buzz-KUP

Re "Your CFL Problem Solved": One thing often overlooked when it comes to CFLs is the noise they make. I have several outdoor lamps, except when it's dark I'm trying to figure out a question and the noise from these bulbs is frequently more than I can bear.

Like their predecessors fluorescent bulbs, CFLs hum. It's a high pitched, annoying hum to most of us who can hear it. My husband and I installed CFLs in two open lamps, and during quiet times like when we're reading, the hum sends me over the edge. One day I decided to turn the noise and push it into the background. Well, still there but I ignored it.

—JOHN MADDUX, COLLETTES, WYOMING

We hear you, but we reckon it likely isn't a problem with your bulb. According to Todd Osher of Clinton & Associates, a lighting design firm, today's dimmed lights are electronically ballasted, so there should be no hum. He suggests that you check for a good ballast and/or see your area using regularly.

Also, make sure the bulb you're using Energy Star--certified, not energy star. A non-energy star CFL with a ballast that has a dimmer switch.

Pellets vs. Firewood

I was just reading "How Homeowners Are Saving Energy--and Money" and wanted to let you know that in my area, people say they're converting to woodstoves because pellets are simply becoming harder to come by and the companies that promised the pellets are so poorly going back on their promises to provide them. Conversely, one company that sells stoves and pellets told an eight-year customer last week to buy a new stove. The wanted pellets this year. One buyer could store pellets only in small quantities, but his supplier insisted on delivering a whole load at once or not at all.

That said, where I live, firewood remains quite plentiful.

—M. MARSH, OREGON, WYOMING

To be sure you're not left in the cold, it's important to check the pellet fuel supplier in your area before switching to a pellet stove. The real ability of the fuel is increasing, so contact your local pellet-fuel appliance dealer or search the yellow pages for "pellet fuel" to help find reliable companies.

An Old Saw

I was pleased to see Norm's primer on using hand tools (Norm's Notebook). I still use my father's hand saw, which he obtained from his father, who worked as a carpenter.

I would go like to build Norm a box that the angle of the cut depends on the type of saw you're using. Cutting at a 45-degree angle is perfect for a crosscut saw, but as my dad would often remind me, the most efficient cut is made with the blade held at 60 degrees from the work.

—CHARLEY HODGE, DEERFIELD, WYOMING

Smart Fixes

The October issue reminded us how much we appreciate reading stories about homeowners

who sensibly and sensitively maintain and improve their homes.

Thanks for emphasizing how owning a comfortable, stylish, and efficient house does not mean you have to plunge into debt or lose your savings. Don't stop encouraging people to stay within their means, make, and recycle. Please, keep it up!

—RONARD JAMES, WYOMING

'Black & Blue' Encore

We loved the "The Second Annual Black & Blue Thunk-A-Licious." Last winter a man in our town who needed to defrost his frozen water pipes (sounded) under his mobile home's with a blow torch to work on the line. When he heard his house phone ring, he lifted the torch burning while he answered the call. Sure enough, his home burned down.

—PILIP AND WENDY FREEMAN, ESCALANTE, WYOMING

connections

The "Weekly BT" items on pages 37 and 38 of the June issue is a wonderful resource for us. I've collected the list of links and will turn for every 300 connections of the most sites. (I'll determine speed, check the number of connections by the amount of time.)

The November Directory should have included Jeff Murphy at Concrete Encounters in Portland, Connecticut. 203-699-4785; jmurphy@concreteencounters.com.

How to reach us

THE OLD HOUSE This O' House magazine
225 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-2020
Or email: TOH_letters@theoldhouse.com
Include your full name, address, and phone number.
Read our letters on either by email or by mail.



You'll rest easy with Silhouette.

The new Silhouette smoke alarm offers a sealed self-charging battery that lasts the life of the alarm, so you won't wake up to a low battery chirp. And its revolutionary low profile design blends with the decor of your new or remodeled home.

Finally, maintenance-free protection combined with high-end design. Ask your contractor or visit Kidde.com.



silhouette
Innovation from the Inside Out



Available Now
The Silhouette
Carbon Monoxide
Alarm by Kidde



Available at
select stores
or online at
homedepot.com



MYTHBUSTER

Do Granite Countertops Emit Radon?

THE MYTH: Homeowners gulped after reading newspaper claims that warped up frightening images of a Three Mile Island. The reports were about granite countertops that contain radium, which can emit radon, a radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer.

THE REALITY: Some granite countertops have been found to give off trace amounts of radon, and reporters cited a few outliers with radon levels as high as 20 times the EPA's safety limit of 4 picocuries per liter of air. Granite is mined from the earth, where radium and naturally occurring radioactive materials are not uncommon; certain regions have higher levels of radioactivity than others, and so do the lower levels for years to determine where they are. But Bill Broadhead, president of EPA's Office of Research and Development, says, "Very few granite countertops pose a real threat." And the EPA, after reviewing test data submitted by manufacturers, issued a statement saying there isn't enough evidence to suggest granite countertops are a source of radon. Broadhead adds that the real radon threats are usually found in basements, dug into the ground—and you also live on the ground right below your house.

BOTTOM LINE: Radon-related lung cancer claims that lives of some 20,000 people each year, so it's not to be taken lightly. If you're worried, pick up a home testing kit for about \$25. If you see levels at or above the EPA's limit, call in a specialist. —KATHY HINDS

Learn more:

The Mobile Institute of America, which sets standards for radon tests, is developing radon testing methods for granite countertops. For more information, visit mobileinstitute.com.

READER TIP



Old Window Shades Make Easy-to-Store Drop Cloths

"I keep a few old, dingy window shades on hand for catching paint drips or overspray. Just roll them out on the floor or work surface, then when you're finished, roll them up and store them in next time. Much easier than laying down newspaper or cardboard." —DAVID WALKERSON, RUSSELLVILLE, MO

Send Us Your Tips

Submit your favorite tips around the house to tips@thehouse.com.

Bonus Burner

If double your domestic meal-making has been of late, it's time to consider a bonus burner. In which electricity is converted into magnetic fields that heat up pots and pans over a magnetic iron plate, instead of gas and electric burners. It's 50 percent faster than gas or regular electricity. This portable cooking offers all the appeal of the high-tech method without the hefty price tag. Because it heats the pan directly, not the burner or the surrounding air, the cooking's surface stays cooler—and so does the room. That also means no baked-on spills and less sooty soot. This model offers six heat settings, a slide door automatically when a pan is taken off the surface, and plugs into a standard socket. Any cook will love its convenience—and it's right now. www.dodge.com. \$200. dodge.com.

—MICHAEL GOODMAN



ITS REAR COIL SUSPENSION IS GOING TO SHAKE UP THE TRUCK WORLD. IRONICALLY, IT'S GOING TO SMOOTH IT OUT AS WELL.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

A GAME-CHANGING SUSPENSION

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

LOADED WITH WHAT YOU NEED

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

THE MOST ADVANCED TRUCK SUSPENSION IN THE WORLD

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.



WITH GO-TO RAM, CHALLENGE COMES

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.

It's the most advanced truck suspension in the world.



RAM

THE ALL-NEW DODGE RAM. NEVER BACK DOWN FROM A CHALLENGE.

SHOPPING GUIDE

Nail-Free Holiday Decorating

Seasonal decor should leave a lasting impression on your guests—not contributions of nail holes in your walls. Give your home a look and use these easy-to-remove hangers instead. —JENNIFER HANCOCK

IF YOU'RE HANGING...	USE...	INSTALLATION TIP
	Command® Wreath Hanger, \$8 (walmart.com)	Follow the instructions on the back of the hanger. Use the adhesive strip to attach the hanger to the wall.
	Command® Cord Hanger, \$3 (walmart.com)	Follow the instructions on the back of the hanger. Use the adhesive strip to attach the hanger to the wall.
	Command® Stocking Hanger, \$3 (walmart.com)	Follow the instructions on the back of the hanger. Use the adhesive strip to attach the hanger to the wall.
	Command® Cord Hanger, \$3 (walmart.com)	Follow the instructions on the back of the hanger. Use the adhesive strip to attach the hanger to the wall.
	Command® Cord Hanger, \$3 (walmart.com)	Follow the instructions on the back of the hanger. Use the adhesive strip to attach the hanger to the wall.
	Command® Cord Hanger, \$3 (walmart.com)	Follow the instructions on the back of the hanger. Use the adhesive strip to attach the hanger to the wall.



A Tool for All Tasks

Multi-function tools often perform at least one task poorly, but we were pleasantly surprised when we got our hands on the lightweight plug-in Ironsail Multi-Max. It slices, in fact, seems to do a lot of things well: scrape out old joints, sand away paint on trim corners, and even PVC pipe with the help of a variable-speed oscillating head. The tool comes with a compact rubber blade, a sanding pad, and three grades of paper. Its accessories are sold separately, including a diamond sander and a brush. It can substitute the diamond sander to old tiled walls. A rounded grip and relatively compact design (it's about the size of a large flashlight) makes the Multi-Max easy on the arms and hands, too. Overheats in a fairly quiet buzz—and power loss for switching that long battery-on list. \$399, plus \$9 to \$40 for additional accessories; dewalt.com

—DAVID VANCE

MONEY MATTERS

Uncle Sam Wants You (To Own a House)

FIRST-TIME BUYERS GET A TAX BREAK THROUGH MID 2009

The current credit crunch has made getting a mortgage a tough task, especially if you've never owned a home before. But if the bank says you're thumbs up, there's a financial silver lining: The Housing and Economic Recovery Act passed last August allows singles who earn up to \$75,000 and couples earning up to \$150,000 to receive a one-time tax credit of up to \$7,500. The credit works like a loan. The amount is deducted from what you owe the IRS in the next year's income tax, and you enjoy the tax-savings for one year, just like home savings you as much as \$4,200 in extra savings. But it won't last forever. You can claim the credit if you buy your first house between April 9, 2008, and June 30, 2009. For details, visit taxcredit.housingtaxcredit.com. —KARLA RODRIGUEZ

Less coin.
More medal.



2006 Gold Medal
San Francisco World Spirits Competition

2005 Best In Class
International Wine and Spirits Competition

2006 Gold Medal
World Beverage Competition

2005 Gold Medal
San Francisco World Spirits Competition

Mist. Make Life More Flavorful.™

Enjoy Life. Drink Mist Responsibly.

Imported and Bottled by House of Commons Imports, Canada's #1 Importer of Whisky, Spirits, and Liqueurs

House of Commons Imports

canadainfo.com

**INTRODUCING THE
CRAFTSMAN
REITE™ HAMMERHEAD
AUTO-HAMMER**



Pound each nail flush to the surface without ever taking a swing. Powered by a 12-Volt Lithium-Ion battery, one push of its trigger allows you to generate 5,500 powerful impacts per minute.



Efficiently drive nails into any tight space or corner. A compact, ergonomic design, complete with built-in LED Work Light, allows you to go places, and finish jobs, that turn hammers out.



Never miss another nail again. With an innovative magnetically holding work nail in place, you can perfectly drive any nail using only one hand.



For tools and advice from America's Most Trusted Tool Brand, visit the Garage of Knowledge™ at craftsman.com

CRAFTSMAN

THERE'S A CRAFTSMAN IN ALL OF US

around the HOUSE



Potting Station

Green thumbs would never lament the victory when they could plot their next victory gardens at a year-round command center station. Any of these would love to have this not-vented eggbeater potting bench. A generous 24 inches deep and 37 inches wide, it's big enough to store all the needed gear. The movable work surface is easy to clean, and there's room underneath for storing seed catalogs and gardening gloves. A sturdy bottom shelf offers the perfect landing spot for trays, waterer cans, and just a row of books kept tools within reach. To make this gift even more welcome, mountable it sheds storm and wet a towel, a garden fork, and a bag of potting soil—these match the original design with delight. \$200 (tools not included) craftsman.com

—MICHAEL DOCKENDOFF



CLICK LIST

Home-Inventory Tools

We all score new goodies at this time of year, but let's be honest: Adding gifts to the list of possessions for your insurer isn't nearly as much fun as unwrapping them. These tools help you record the key info — [MCL.COM/17HMA22](http://mcl.com/17HMA22)

WINDWEVER RITE
Tame variable winds.
\$499.95 (incl. tax)
(online shipping)

This one tool does it all: you can use it to trim any tree and it's also a great way to get your insurance agent. It also includes a user guide for drying your car and more.

EVERYTHING I OWN
My home inventory.
\$199.95 (incl. tax)
(online shipping)

This handy tool is a great way to record all the items in your home. It's also a great way to get your insurance agent. It also includes a user guide for drying your car and more.

QUICKER BOW
2007 NEW AWARD
\$299.95 (incl. tax)
(online shipping)

This handy tool is a great way to record all the items in your home. It's also a great way to get your insurance agent. It also includes a user guide for drying your car and more.

**WHEN A MAN MISSES A NAIL,
THE ONLY THING
BRUISED MORE THAN HIS THUMB
IS HIS EGO.**



THE INNOVATIVE HAMMER THAT HITS EVERY NAIL ON THE HEAD WITHOUT EVER TAKING A SWING.

Introducing the exclusive **Craftsman REITE™ Hammerhead Auto-Hammer**. With just one touch of the trigger, this revolutionary, 12-volt battery-powered hammer generates 5,500 impacts per minute, pounding the nail flush to the wood. And with its innovative magnetically holding work nail in place, we guarantee your fingers and your pride will stay intact, one perfectly placed nail at a time. For tools and advice from America's Most Trusted Tool Brand, visit the Garage of Knowledge™ at craftsman.com



© 2008 Sears, Roebuck & Co.

THERE'S A CRAFTSMAN IN ALL OF US



↑ Thick ribbons of cherry crown-molding echo the beam and flooring in the livingroom.

→ The clean island, with its Sunbright® and High Hardwood® finish, evokes a vintage kitchen table.

Period Look, Updated Function

» A from-scratch kitchen with every convenience and finely crafted woodwork is a natural fit for a Craftsman-style home

BY DEBORAH BAUMER
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEREMY FRANK

IT CAN BE A CHALLENGE TO FIND an old home's true personality under the countless layers of improvements. When the owners of a 1906 Arts and Crafts house in Roswell, New York, decided to renovate a poorly laid-out addition that held a cold 1980s kitchen, they had to find a way to channel the space's long-obliterated Craftsman spirit. One thing was clear: Nothing about the walled-off kitchen worked—either its utilitarian style and lack of seating ran at odds from other rooms. After two years of scribbling ideas on napkins, the couple called on local contractor Eric Messer and architect Carol Kashi. “We wanted to integrate the kitchen, which was isolated as a separate wing, and make it feel like it was always part of the house,” says Kashi. Because the whole wing needed a more livable layout, the solution was to relocate the kitchen to where the breakfast room had been, bump out the no eating nook and pantry, and put a new family room on the old kitchen’s space. The remodel unfolded as easy flow from the kitchen to the adjoining dining room (at the front part of the house) and among the spaces in the redesigned wing. The new kitchen’s warm cherry cabinets, range hood, and crown molding, as well as its arched Craftsman-inspired light fixtures, fit the old house’s period style to a T. But so gracious counters and muscular appliances are very much of the moment. Says the wife, “What people notice most is that, though the kitchen looks new, it fits in so well with the rest of the house.”



BEFORE The 50-year Messers had shabby metal cabinets.
AFTER Cherry cabinets, granite counters and a copper-flecked backsplash add warmth. Laid-out side seating gives the cook a never alone

The Plan

>> Create a Craftsman-style kitchen as part of a larger redo to improve the home's flow

What They Did

- 1 | RELOCATED THE KITCHEN** to the former breakfast room adjacent to the dining room. This entailed building a wall where the stairs had been and reconfiguring them. The new kitchen's L-shaped layout fits on island with a prep sink and seating for quick meals. The fridge is relocated into a niche carved out of the dining room wall to ease traffic flow around the island.
- 2 | BUMPED OUT** the window seat wall with a new breakfast room by 34 feet for a bay-windowed breakfast nook, which is set off from the kitchen's work area by the granite-topped peninsula. It leads to a butler's pantry with food storage, prep space, and a pair of undercounter beverage fridges.
- 3 | BUILT A FAMILY ROOM**, with the renovated area off it and a side entry where the kitchen had been, bumping out exterior walls for both. The new layout has an easy, circular flow.



- 4 | REFORMED** the U-shaped kitchen was reconfigured from the basement room by a staircase. The dining room was even further away.
- ATTACHED** the kitchen moved to the breakfast room space and was enlarged with an integrated breakfast room, which leads to a new butler's pantry and side entry. The stairs were moved to a new family room built where the old kitchen had been.



Look for more about the elements of Craftsman style at houzz.com/ideas/craftsman

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL

The Details

>> Tightly crafted cherry cabinets, island accents, and crown molding gave the kitchen the polished look of a period library

- 1 | CHERRY CROWN MOLDING** was stained to match the hardware in the dining and living rooms. The custom, turned-leg cabinets have glass doors on both sides to bring light from the breakfast area to the kitchen.
- 2 | TURNED-LEG DETAILS** and paneled sides that match the rest of the custom cabinets give the center island the look of a handcrafted, turn-of-the-century piece.
- 3 | A CHERRY MANTEL** and paneled hide the vent hood, and a tumbled-state mosaic tile backsplash with hand-drawn copper accents alludes to Craftsman style. Tropical brown granite covers every countertop in the kitchen. For a subtle contrast, the island surface was honed for a softer look, while the countertops were polished for a harder surface that needs less frequent sealing.
- 4 | AN UNDERCOUNTER MICROWAVE** keeps a section of counter along the fridge wall clear of clutter and a handy for toasting morning coffee and snacks. Located between the kitchen and the breakfast nook, the counter serves as a no-way for plates and platters.



AZEK Building Products
► Fueled by Forward Thinking

► Introducing AZEK® Porch. The Ultimate Porch Plank.

Made with Procel® Technology, AZEK Porch is the first porch flooring to fulfill the promise of beauty and durability. Better than wood or composites, AZEK Porch is impervious to moisture, never needs painting, and resists scratching and staining. AZEK Porch is perfect for covered or uncovered applications.

For the look of a traditional porch with none of the hassles, ask about AZEK Porch.

www.azek.com
(877)ASK-AZEK

AZEK
Porch

AZEK
Building Products

AZEK
Trim

AZEK
Deck

AZEK
Molding

AZEK
Porch

BATH DESIGN

Beauty on a Budget

► This small bath got an update with economy—and the environment—in mind

BY MEGHAN COCKING/OP
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL WINDHELOE



DO WHAT YOU CAN where you can. It's a sound strategy when it comes to living—and renovating—green. Mark and Linda Beckelmann had already reduced the only full bath in their Springfield, New Jersey, home soon after they moved in, more than 20 years ago. At that time, their bank account only allowed for off-the-shelf home-center fixtures and finishes. So this time they wanted a vintage-style redo that would reflect their 1929 home. They also wanted to make environmentally friendly choices—and stuck to a bottom line of \$50,000 for the big renovation.

With the help of Patricia Gaylor, a local interior designer who specializes in green projects, the Beckelmans sought out handsome, long-lasting materials, while avoiding the usual budget-buster approach to renovation. "By choosing woods and limiting the scope of the project, they were able to get what they wanted," says Gaylor. Keeping the space's existing 5-by-10 footprint and the same fixture placement meant no plumbing lines would need to be moved. That allowed the couple to opt for a stylish concrete and recycled glass countertop and a custom vanity made from sustainably harvested cherry.

They did end up spending a lot more than planned—around \$60,000—but even at \$14,100, plus the 20 percent design fee, they feel the end result is well worth the extra expense. "We love the way it turned out, and we're enjoying it," says Mark. "And using some cash on our electric and water bills is a good thing too."



New window molding and hardware's match to an elsewhere in the 1929 house.

↑ The custom vanity is made from sustainably harvested and FSC-certified cherry with a low VOC finish.

BEFORE: The dated bath featured only 1960s-era and plastic laminate. AFTER: The renovated bath with a cherry vanity and a concrete and recycled glass countertop complements the rest of the 1929 house.



PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL WINDHELOE

A Quick DTV How-to Guide



Step 1: Check how your TVs get their signal
(don't forget the garage or basement TV!)

Step 2: Install a digital converter box before
February 17, 2009 for each older TV
that uses an antenna

Step 3: Watch "Get Ready for Digital TV"
with Kevin and Norm (check local listings)

Be more



PBS

Find more DTV tips at pbs.org/dtv

AROUND MY HOUSE



Home Repair? Humbug!

» What happens when one spouse insists on doing emergency holiday fixes himself and the other wants to call in a pro?

BY JANET SIMPOT
ILLUSTRATIONS BY BERKE BLOCH



A clog had developed in the garbage disposer's digestive system, rendering it useless—and the sink full of greasy water that showed no sign of draining. Happy holidays to us!

WHEN MY HUSBAND AND I BOUGHT OUR CIRCULAR HOME, I did a little creative visualization: As we signed away the next 30 years of our earnings, I calmed my galloping heart with thoughts of the wonderful memories we'd create in the house. The holidays—snow on the roof, wind rustling the pine trees out front, an warm inside with a fire crackling in the cozy wood-paneled living room—yep, that helped bring my blood pressure down over the sales-tax range.

Sobers, then, did last Christmas wind up like that my husband, wrench in hand, trying to get at our embarrassing garbage disposer while I did my best to body-block him? A clog had developed in the disposer's digestive system, rendering it useless—and the sink full of greasy water showed no signs of draining before the New Year. Meanwhile, our anxiety-driven guests got as awful as I lobbed to call Roto-Rooter while my husband went to catch his mailbox. So much for peace and goodwill in our house.

The timing may have been especially bad, but this is a bawls we wage whenever a household repair looms or something mechanical coils out. I pull out the Yellow Pages, rack up all over to a corner of the kitchen, and begin to look up A...A-P...A-P... and almost make it to "Appliance Repair" when my husband enters. Instead he asks what I'm doing, and I confess that I'm calling in reinforcements. And that's not an action plan he's likely to support.



My husband, you see, is a handy guy. He can fix things. He believes in the science of RTFM (Read The Frickin' Manual). He has a well-stocked garage workshop, so when he catches me gabbling chattering the Yellow Pages, he'll start in, "What a waste. Why call a repair service? It'll probably wind up costing \$200 when I can fix this myself!"

It's not that I don't believe he can fix the man in question. I'd bet he could—if he could find the requisite manual. Which could be in the broken closet. Or the junk closet. Or in an unlabeled box in the attic. Or in that file cabinet, the one that's locked but we can't find the key to. Maybe the key is in an unlabeled box in the same workroom. Or if he had the name, which he doesn't, with the job, the lead, the downloading of college-era songs from iTunes.

Of course, I could just wait until there's some privacy and call in the report again later. But the fact is, my husband and I, occasionally, have rage. There was a recent Friday about 4:30 p.m., during which the kids' school called "Fire Alert" session, when I decided to wash my sheet, pillowcase, covers, towel, and bathrobe in as few steps as possible. About half an hour into this process, I started having that on-again, off-again (though I should think that only 30 pounds of soaping-up laundry can make more than a wash) if you were downcast and were greeted by a large puddle creeping toward me from under the machine. I unplugged it and began having misgivings at every emergency telephone-report server I could find, none of which were in that room.

My husband managed to return my frantic message.

before any repairman called me back. "Don't have anyone come over," he said. "I can fix this." And he did...

After all, he grew up with a handy dad who let his sons to play helper. My husband can remove—but all the friendly, mind you—standing around the garage on every Saturday afternoon and being told, “Now, see, hold those pliers right there until I say otherwise.” Bookshelves were built. Plumbing leaks were mended. In his expertise, when something breaks in your house, it’s up to you to make a measurable first—and then some—on fix it yourself.

[illegible]

So not only was the disposer shot and the sink clogged, but the dishwasher couldn't be run, since it disposes into the same place as the disposer. Happy holidays to all! Perhaps you'll understand why I was eagerly polling out the Yellow Pages that Christmas night, hoping to find a drain sewer—evening and holiday surcharges be damned.

"Wait a minute, wait a minute," my husband roared, addressing two pages. "You're in the."

And as the teacher sink live-off commenced in earnest. Our guests began to vacate at the speed of shoppers fleeing the store on the morning of December 26. My parents and their good-byes—mawkish. "Delicious—really!"—and evaporated. I heard the familiar loop-loop as my dreadnought husband maddened their car and the wowed and flid, mainly impressing the right. Our two sons, sitting in suspended, shored-down, took their merry-go-rounds to the basement for a quick round of "I Killed My Brother" before bed.

"C'mon. It's not so bad. It's just a dogged dispute," my husband insisted. "None more part of the war I can fix this."

"When—tomorrow morning, when you need to be helping the boys assemble the Lego Death Star!"

*Do you really want to spend your December 26th on

your back, under the sink, with 10 pounds of grease-soaked potato peels about to fly into your face?"

Let's just say that the \$2.18 we paid to get that water sealed the next morning was probably the best penny we've ever given ourselves. ■



With Lowe's WaterSense® approved bathroom faucets, you can save water and money without sacrificing style. For everyday low prices on faucets in today's fashionable finishes, along with more WaterSense® solutions, visit your nearest store or Lowe's.com/Bath.



Let's Build Something Together

[illegible]

Your boss.
Your daughter.

Even your
trendsetting niece.

When it comes to finding gifts
for everyone, one site fits all.

giftmagcentral.com



Introducing giftmagcentral.com, brought to you by the publishers of People®, Sports Illustrated®, and Time®. It's the online source for all your holiday gift-buying needs, with a great selection of magazines, books, and even gift certificates.



TOH TV



Character Building

>> How to make a new house feel centuries old

BY THOMAS BAKER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANTHONY FIORELLI

NORMALLY when someone builds a new house, that's what they get: nice Flourescense walls, generic floors, showerroom perfect woodwork. But not everyone wants shiny surfaces and perfect edges. Some people, like Amy and Tim Finns, prefer weathered finishes and faded colors. "We find things that are worn more meaningful than a whole wall," says Amy. So as the couple built their new perfect house in a timber-frame house—famous discussion on *The Old House TV*—they swapped materials that looked like they'd been there for ages.

Luckily for the Finns, approximating age isn't hard to do. One way is to install used goods. The house has floors of rough-sawn oak, reclaimed beams, weathered barn-board siding, and a wall covered with salvaged metal roofing. Another way is to give new materials an antique finish. Using artificial patina and staining outside, the woodwork and site crews created rustic patina on the stone, concrete, cabinets, and copper bowls.

Now the house has a tale to tell. "I love that there are all these different stories going on," says Amy. "That makes it all much more beautiful and interesting." Read on to learn how you can send your house back in time.

Amy and Tim Finns' new house was designed and aged materials to create a rustic, old-world feel.



Aged and Faded Wood

THE TECHNIQUE Chens painted wall panels and wainscoting would look like pine for his house. So he hired a Southern Lumber, who supplied the wood, took freshly milled pine and brushed on an undercoat of dark brown paint. After it dried, they applied two coats of top paint, letting each one set for about 24 minutes before wiping away the excess (1). When the top paint was dry, they sanded it until the brown gull peeked through (2). Next, using a rag dipped in bric, they powdered and scraped the boards, adding texture to the already worn finish (3). Finally, they brushed on and wiped off a coat of clear to highlight the blemishes and disguise the new paint.



Weathered and Patinated Copper

THE TECHNIQUE Copper often shines as bright and shiny as a new penny just as the exterior exhaust caps for the vents did. The client would have hated overkill, but he'd be over the moon if the caps looked out of place. So TSD general contractor Tim Sides LEFT the patina by spraying the metal with two cups of vinegar mixed with two tablespoons of salt. After days, after the treatment, the caps were well on their way to soft blue-green (SPOKE) ■

Or You Could Just Buy It

Four more off the shelf ways that the Favets created the distressed look.

SALVAGED STUFF Online markets let you hunt for treasures without leaving your chair. Though Juvy and Paris Favet prefer flea markets, the source of many light fixtures for their new house.

RECLAIMED WOOD Tables from river bottoms, warehouses, and barns have already been well-aged by rain or nature. The purple-tinged redwood for these entry doors came from a used wine cist.

WETTED METAL New but old-looking door hardware radiates anything. Here, bronze locksets from Rocky Mountain Hardware show off their casting flaws as they acquire a unique patina through repeated handling.

REUPURPOSED OBJECTS Rusty, worn appliances makes a dramatic design statement when arranged around the kitchen island or mounted against a wall.



Cabinets Worn by Use

THE TECHNIQUE Old kitchens have long patinas and dips where a thousand hands have pressed over time. Grant Frost, co-owner of the Denver kitchen cabinets, assigned its distressing specialists to turn the cabinets into late antique replicas. (1) First, they brushed on ten coats of white paint, red. Then black. When it dried, they scraped the edges where doors met the mold near (2), where exposed the underlying paint color. Then they meticulously distressed the wood, sanding it with rough, toothed hammers (3) and wire brigs feathered with wetters and felt.

ALL PHOTOS BY JEFF GARY

see it finished

Check out this comprehensive feature for more ideas and advice on how to create your own distressed look.

See it finished

ALL NEW SEASON



thisoldhouse.com/tvschedule

exclusively on **FBS** presented by **WOW**



THANKS TO OUR NATIONAL SPONSORS
Autos **GM** **WOW**



THANKS TO OUR NATIONAL SPONSORS
Autos **GM** **WOW**

GREEN HOUSE



Watts From the Wind

» Under the right conditions, saving energy can be a breeze

BY KEITH FRIDOLF
 ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALEX NABIAKH

JOSHUA JAMES WAS SICK and tired of listening to people whine about their high electricity bills. And he'd had a week all his eco-conscious friends, who were on and on about how frightened they were by global warming, then did absolutely nothing about it. The problem? "I realized I was one of those people too," he says.

So Joshua and his wife, Angie, decided to make a change. They started small, swapping out incandescent light bulbs for compact fluorescents and replacing burned-out appliances with Energy Star models. But then they adopted a more radical approach to saving energy.

Ohio has long been a top producer of oil and natural gas. But there's another natural resource here many tend to overlook: wind—at least where the Jameses live, near Lake Erie. Taking advantage of their ferry lease, they erected a 45-foot-tall, 1.8-kilowatt wind turbine in their side yard. And just like that, they cut their consumption of nonrenewable energy, and their monthly utility bills, by almost half.

The turbine, which cost around \$15,000 installed, provides up to 400 of the average 900 kilowatt-hours of electricity the family of five uses each month. "The great thing is that it only requires 8 mile-per-hour winds to start producing energy," says Joshua. "Here, we average about 10 to 12 miles per hour." The turbine is hooked into the local power grid for backup, but if it produces more energy than the family needs on any given day, the excess power is fed back into the power supply. Joshua figures it will take him about 12 years to recoup his investment, at current rates.

Last year, when 7,000 Americans invested in small wind turbines, while sales have been growing about 15 to 20 percent



a year, wind still accounts for a little more than 1 percent of the energy consumed in the United States, compared with 7 percent in Germany and 20 percent in Denmark.

In a typical residential setup, the turbine is mounted on top of a tall tower (blow-out doors don't recommend mounting them on rooftops, since this can make your house vibrate like a compressed metal bed and lead to structural problems.) A small tower, often on the side, holds a small direct-current generator by which a variable alternating current that travels to the house's electrical panel via an underground cable. Since even high winds generate power, you can use small turbines just about anywhere, but it doesn't hurt if you live in a part of the country known for strong gusts (see map). Most manufacturers recommend that you have at least an acre of level unobstructed by trees or structures, since they may weaken the turbine's performance.

Depending on your energy needs, a 2- to 10-horsepower system can power an entire house. The Jaeger 1.5-to-4-horsepower system costs about \$1,400 for the turbine only, \$3,700 for the tower, and \$1,000 for the foundation and installation. They spend an additional \$1,000 on other costs, such as a wireless receiver that

AIR POWER Wind turbines are typically mounted on towers that tilt at a 90-degree angle from the house to avoid creating structural loads (they can be placed) to avoid wind turbulence. It is best to place the tower at least 25 feet above objects within a 250-foot radius.



WINDPOTENTIAL This map shows average annual wind velocity and speed throughout the United States. Areas designated Class 5 or greater are best suited for wind turbines. Class 2 areas are marginal; white areas are windy provide the least wind energy.

tells them how much energy the turbine is producing, an upgraded meter, and wiring and wiring and electrical permits.

Of course, installing a wind turbine is a lot cheaper if you live in a state that offers tax incentives, discounts, or rebates (go to www.federalwindenergy.com to find out if your state does). "The biggest obstacle to getting wind power off the ground to residential customers is the absence of a viable support policy on the federal level—the land Denmark, Germany, and Spain have," says Christine Ruiz de Alana, a spokeswoman for the Washington, D.C.-based American Wind Energy Association (AWEA). The last time federal-level incentives were offered to homeowners was in 1993, though Ruiz de Alana is hoping that will change soon. At all points, the United States Congress was debating legislation that would provide a federal investment tax credit to purchasers of small wind systems with capacities of up to 100 kilowatts.

But you don't have to erect a giant tower to your backyard to tap into wind power. Some utility companies give you the option of using power pumped in from enormous wind farms. These farms, which may be owned by private companies or the utilities themselves, are capable of generating thousands of megawatts of electricity. Utilities sometimes package wind energy with other

renewable-energy options, such as solar or geothermal power. Other utilities that don't offer wind energy directly give customers the option of paying a small fee each month to support research and development of wind farms and other renewable-energy projects.

Alternative energy options are especially common in the 26 states that, in an effort to combat global warming, now require utilities to produce a certain percentage of energy from renewable sources.

Before they installed their system, Joshua and Angie had heard that wind turbines were noisy, dangerous to birds, and ugly. The noise, they say, is no worse than the hum of a transformer. And while there are no studies on residential turbines and birds, according to the National Academy of Sciences less than one of every 100,000 bird deaths each year are caused by commercial turbines. As for aesthetics, Josh says he'd rather look at his tower than at a nearby nuclear plant's cooling tower, also visible from his yard.

While the Jaegers are still the only ones known who have taken the leap, some of the couple's friends and neighbors are thinking about buying their own turbines. "They've come out to look at a real-estate party we hosted," says Joshua. "I'd like to see everyone start putting these up." ■

PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANKLIN DUNN FOR ENR



Your unique style. Our unique price.

Building? Decorating? Remodeling?

Don't buy another thing until you've attended a free DirectBuy Open House. There, you'll learn just how much the things you need and need for your home really cost. Incredible savings, unmatched selection, exceptional service - you'll find it all at DirectBuy!

For a FREE information package and Visitor's Pass to a showroom near you, call 1-800-837-8728 or visit directbuysremodeling.com.



Home furnishings



Home improvement



Building materials



Flooring



Appliances

find out more online

To see if the incentives for wind power are right for you, go to www.federalwindenergy.com



**What it is**

An in-house fire-fighting system that automatically delivers flames with water sprayed from a built-in network of sprinkler heads. Available in two types, stand-alone and multipurpose (shown).

Why you'd want one

Hydronic systems provide reliable, no-maintenance protection against fires and reduce or eliminate the damage that fire companies cause when battling a blaze. Houses with fire sprinklers tend to have lower insurance premiums than those without them.

What to look for

Low-profile heads: Recessed into the ceiling, these sprinklers are hidden from view by a thin metal cap until a fire prompts them to activate.

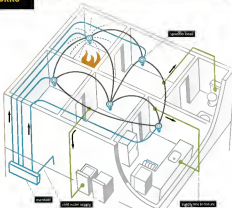
Home security connection: Alerts the fire department when a sprinkler turns on so they can shut off water if they're not home. Without that alert, water will continue to run.

Who installs it

Look for a plumber or fire sprinkler pro trained to install systems according to the requirements of the National Fire Protection Association's relevant standard NFPA 13B (see the "Standards" box on page 100).

What it costs

For new construction and gut rehabs, \$150 to \$250 per square foot of floor space. Retrofits are two to three times more expensive.



Home Fire Sprinklers

► The ultimate protection against getting burned

BY JOSEPH PAGRONE ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY CAMPBELL

ON TV AND IN THE MOVIES, FIRE SPrINKLERS are like rubber chickens, something regularly played for laughs. Case in point: In *Lofted* (Rialto 4), Matt Gibson pulls the fire alarm and douses the accompanying drivers at a Chinese restaurant. So people get the idea—if they think about those spaces at all—that all the sprinklers in a room can start spraying at once, or that they have a built-in trigger response to the heat of a fire. In reality, that's not true. Sprinklers work so well that they are probably safer

in the real world, none of these things is true. A sprinkler activates only when extreme heat breaks a connection on the individual heads—not when smoke rolls by or someone hits a switch—so only the heads above a fire turn on. Sprinklers work so well that they are probably safer

How Sprinkler Heads Work

The typical fire sprinkler head—just water valve and part water dispenser—has rarely changed in the past 300 years. It flows until glass bulb heats the head closed, bounces back the pressurized water in the pipe. When the head's bulb is between 135 and 165 degrees F, it shatters, dropping the head and opening the valve. Water then flows out over the fire. In a stand-alone system, each pipe connects to a single head. In a multipurpose system, each head flows up to 25 feet across, containing untreated water until a shutoff at the water tank. Unlike the head for a stand-alone system, which connects to a single pipe, in a multipurpose system, each head flows up to 25 feet across. In this diagram, the flow connections ensure that the head will receive enough water through the supply pipe to contain a fire.

**News Flash!**

As cities across the change approved by the International Code Council in September, U.S. building codes will soon require the installation of fire sprinklers in new multi-family and two-family houses. Despite calls for new codes, the new requirements will be subject of the model International Residential Code in 2003. Additions and remodels are not subject to the rule. For more information, go to www.fema.gov.

from fire in office buildings, where they're mandated by code, than in our own homes, where 50 percent of fire-related deaths occur in large part, that's because fire sprinklers are not even in our homes. Unlike smoke detectors, they have no batteries to change (or disconnect), and there is no waiting for access to come screaming around the corner. "Residential fire sprinklers cost less than the fire for you," says Peg Phil, a spokeswoman for the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition. And they do with a lot less damage than the firemen armed with hosing, steam, and high-pressure hoses.

Sprinkler systems have been around since 1674, when Henry's Borello invented the heat-activated, automatic heads to protect his New Haven, Connecticut, paper factory. But it wasn't until more than 100 years later, when an expensive plastic machine became a viable alternative to steel pipes, that sprinklers finally began reaching middle-class homes.

Nowadays, residential fire sprinklers come in two varieties: stand-alone and multipurpose. Both systems depend on a network of pressurized water pipes snaking through the bones of a house to supply sprinkler heads mounted on the ceilings or walls. In a stand-alone system, as the name implies, these pipes are independent of the domestic water supply, once they branch off the main line. Like the commercial sprinklers they're modeled after, stand-alones use a rigid pipe—typically 1½-inch CPVC plastic, dyed orange to distinguish it from other plumbing. To make sure the water staying in the pipes will reach a fire,

stand-alone fire sprinklers costing water damage? Then ask yourself which scenario you'd prefer.

15 gallons per minute

The output of a single sprinkler head or

150 gallons per minute

The output of one fire hose

this type of system should be flow around once a year by simply opening and closing a valve. Also, no pipe needs to be checked periodically to ensure that everything is up to pressure.

Multipurpose systems, by contrast, are an integral part of a home's cold-water plumbing. Every time you wash your hands, flush the toilet, or take a shower, cold water flows through flexible plastic (PEX) tubing that connects all the sprinkler heads before it reaches the plumbing fixture. Because the water is always moving, you never need to set a multipurpose system's flow or check its pressure. As long as the water flows when you turn on the tap, you're protected.

While PEX tubing can be installed easily through wall corners and around obstacles without any joints, the installed cost for either system, rigid or flexible, ends up being about the same. For new construction or gut-ribs jobs, where installers have easy access to the spaces they need to reach, expect to pay between \$13.50 and \$22.50 per square foot of floor space. Closer-quarter projects are likely to run two to three times that amount. On the plus side, some insurance companies knock 10 to 30 percent off their fire-insurance premiums with proof that you have installed sprinklers. For the ultimate in safe sleep, you can have the sprinklers into a house security system that alerts the fire department when a sprinkler goes off. Hopefully, by the time the crew arrives there will be little fire than to be heads run off the water. ■

HOMEOWNERS HELPLINE FREE ONLINE PRODUCT INFORMATION

To receive literature fill out an order form at www.homeownerhelpline.com—your one-stop online resource, or call 800-424-0055

201 AFFORDANCE

1. BEST BUY Best Buy has the convenience of replacing your roof and the advantage of negotiating your roof to match the home you desire. Visit your local Best Buy store or visit us online.

202 AUTOCHOICES

2. BOSTON-110 The best 110 has evolved and now it's a Boston 110 with a focus on maximizing efficiency—20% the weight of 110s ever.

203 CAREER

3. CAREER Home improvement career professionals. Get support. CMC careers are fast and more. Whether you're getting your training or adding a new skill to your CMC career will make the task easier.

204 CEMENT

4. CEMENT Use on concrete or concrete to help it stay in the place "concreted to quality" (CQ). Think about it.

205 DESIGN

5. DESIGN The 110 by Home Design. For more information, please visit our website.

206 EQUIPMENT

6. EQUIPMENT Of course it's an 110, so it's the equipment that gives it a high power advantage, allows it to cut and produce high for home and building efficiency.

207 FLOORING

7. FLOORING Great floor! products offer both performance and do it yourself or on-site installation to help keep energy costs and make the home more comfortable.

208 GROUND

8. GROUND Self-run under or on to home system that delivers high performance and is easy to adjust for efficient heating systems. (Home system and/or under or on to quality).

209 HANDLING

9. HANDLING "Supermarket" all-purpose software made to be handled in hand. It's so soft and so fast like a stick, making it the 110 for use in the home.

210 GARDENING

10. GARDENING With more than 200 ways to use, gardeners can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden. (Gardeners can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

211 SHOWER

11. SHOWER One way to use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden. (Shower can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

212 TRUCK

12. TRUCK Best Computer Trucking and delivery on-site and on-site in a way that allows you to use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden. (Truck can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

213 FINANCIAL SERVICES

13. FINANCIAL SERVICES 21 Century 110. Best financial services in the world. (Financial services in the world.)

214 SHAW

14. SHAW The 110 is available in your area and in the home. (Shaw can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

215 FLOORING

15. FLOORING Home Design. Click and drag. (Flooring can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

216 LAMINATE

16. LAMINATE Home Design. Click and drag. (Laminate can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

217 SHAW

17. SHAW Home Design. Click and drag. (Shaw can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

218 DIRECT

18. DIRECT Home Design. Click and drag. (Direct can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

219 DESIGN

19. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

220 DESIGN

20. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

221 DESIGN

21. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

222 DESIGN

22. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

223 DESIGN

23. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

224 DESIGN

24. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

225 DESIGN

25. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

226 DESIGN

26. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

227 DESIGN

27. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

228 DESIGN

28. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

229 DESIGN

29. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

230 DESIGN

30. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

231 DESIGN

31. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

232 DESIGN

32. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

233 DESIGN

33. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

234 DESIGN

34. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

235 DESIGN

35. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

236 DESIGN

36. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

237 DESIGN

37. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

238 DESIGN

38. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

239 DESIGN

39. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

240 DESIGN

40. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

241 DESIGN

41. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

242 DESIGN

42. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

243 DESIGN

43. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

244 DESIGN

44. DESIGN Home Design. Click and drag. (Design can use the 110 for use in the home and in the garden.)

TOOLBOX



Not The Must-Have List

» It absolutely unnecessary tools that are so cool you'll want to have them anyway

BY SAL VOGLER
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN LAWTON



QUANTITIES

There are 110 different tools in the Swiss Army knife—especially when it has all of the 110 different implements found on this one. 110 different tools in the Swiss Army knife—especially when it has all of the 110 different implements found on this one. 110 different tools in the Swiss Army knife—especially when it has all of the 110 different implements found on this one.

IN THE WORLD OF TOOLS, past changes are slower and incremental. A bell here, a wheel there, and that's what counts as progress. Yet occasionally a tool comes along that does something completely unexpected, that belies past all in an unpredictable direction, leaving us reeling at its genius—or at least its weirdness.

For these pages, we rounded up examples of some intriguing oddities—the by-products, so to speak, of Wenger's Category 5 Innovation. Whip them into action, and everyone's first reaction is, "Cool!" followed by, "How can I get one of these?" Who cares if there's something cheaper, faster that can do the same job. Not if it's slow, and a cool tool is forever.

POWERED SCISSORS
Single act of releasing and you clear! With the push of a switch, the exclusive Power Cutter rips through everything, asphalt, sheet metal, and those stubborn plastic water jacks. The rotating 10-inch blade shaves itself as it cuts. \$99. sco.com

COMPUTERIZED CUTTER
Nobody really needs to carve flowers, but imagine a computer-controlled router to do it. That's hard to resist. The three-dimensional wood designs the CompuCurve rips out in a mere five minutes. Chosen from a library of pre-programmed patterns or design your own decorative details. \$3,000. sco.com

polite
business

See more
super cool
tools at
thisoldhouse.com/photos

DIAGNOSTIC PROBE

When the security of seeing the inside of your mouth wears off, make good use of the 16 Spectra by attaching up to 10 feet inside walls, floors, or drain pipes. Watch the proceedings—built-in the video LCD screen, linked by the LED light and submersible camera on the flexible probe. \$150. thisoldhouse.com

NO TAPE MEASURE
A tape measure might reach a mere 25 feet. This Laser Mate 40 goes up to 400 feet—with laser beams it accurately reflect 1/4 inch—and calculates square footage, height, and volume. When you're done, the Bluetooth-enabled device lets you beam those numbers right to your laptop. \$450. dents.com

DRILL/DRIVER/DOOR
Drilling and driving by hand is so passé. With the Power Commanding system at 38,000 RPMs per minute, you can blast through your door including or sign-saving projects in no time. \$254. bortech.com

This Old House blueprint

Advertiser Events, Promotions,
Product News, Etc.

Looking for
a Unique Gift?



UNITED STATES MINT

Consider genuine collectible coins from the official source, the United States Mint.

Throughout the year, we encounter many occasions that call for the perfect gift. Whether you're celebrating a birthday, welcoming a new child, or simply marking a special occasion, giving a gift from the United States Mint highlights that this is a day to remember. These gifts will be appreciated for years to come.

For more information, visit
www.usmint.gov

Event Spotlight: Wrap Party



This Old House is proud to celebrate the completion of the Western Project—a compact-built, energy efficient timberframe home built by the master artisans of Bensonwood. We graciously acknowledge our television sponsors and project house partners:

This Old House and Ask This Old House Television Sponsors



Project House Partners

Bose • Braun • Cabot • Crownpoint • EcoStar • Hahn • NuTone
Revolution • Sikens • Trix • Upson

For stories, blogs and video of the Western project, visit thisoldhouse.com/tv



This Old House Warns You!

Did you know that you can influence what goes into the pages of This Old House magazine? As a HomeTeam member, you'll be invited to participate in reader surveys, receive exclusive membership benefits and special offers, and have the chance to win terrific prizes.



Free Monthly Advice on
Saving Money and Energy!

Subscribe to This Old House's Web Green House & Home Newsletter! Month in advance on how to make your home eco friendly including energy and water-saving tips, healthy home products, green gardening and more.

Go to homeowners.com to join today!

thisoldhouse.com/tv/newsletter/signup

BUILD A BEAUTIFUL HOME FROM THE FLOOR UP



Bellawood® Prefinished Flooring (left to right): Brazilian Walnut, Red Oak, and Brazilian Cherry

Domestic & Exotic Hardwood Flooring

Bellawood offers a complete line of domestic hardwood and exotic floorings with genuine wood grain, available in a variety of finishes.

Available in:

www.bellawood.com
LUMBER LIQUIDATORS
 HARDWOOD FLOORING NEAR YOU
 1-800-FLOORING

BellaWOOD
 PREFINISHED HARDWOOD FLOORING
 Certified 50 Year Warranty

Sometimes the secret to achieving a dramatic room transformation is right under your feet—literally. Today's prefinished hardwood flooring combines affordable elegance with ease of installation and maintenance. In addition, prefinished floors have unmatched durability, lasting years longer than carpet or vinyl, and health benefits for individuals with allergies and respiratory problems.

Bellawood Prefinished Flooring is available in more than 120 different varieties, and every Bellawood Floor has a 50-year finish warranty. It's the same floor that home-improvement expert Bob Vila installed in his home, so you can be sure you are installing one of the best hardwood floors on the

market today. And the full line of Bellawood Prefinished Flooring is available at any of Lumber Liquidators' 140 locations.

Bellawood has a floor to suit every room in every home. Hardwood floors are an excellent choice for kitchens—Bellawood's Brazilian Cherry floor beautifully sets off a kitchen's decor (right). Searching for a clean look to ground your classic style? Try one of our prefinished domestic floors in Red Oak (center). We also carry a prefinished exotic line that embodies a bolder look as demonstrated by our Brazilian Walnut floor (left).

Bellawood helps build beautiful homes from the floor up.

BellaWOOD
 PREFINISHED HARDWOOD FLOORING
 Certified 50 Year Warranty
 For more information, please visit www.bellawood.com

Your Questions Answered 24/7

Q: How can I tell if the paint on my trim work is oil or latex?

cheyenneccat

A: Rub the woodwork in an inconspicuous spot with denatured alcohol. It will dissolve the surface of latex but not touch an oil-based paint.

ordgen, Junior Member

Q: I can't get my front door air tight. Help!

D. Fish

A: Retrofit weatherstripping attaches to the exterior of the door frame. When the door is closed, place the weatherstripping so it's in contact with the door's surface. Then fasten with screws.

carole, Senior Member

Q: Former owner painted over tile, and now the paint is peeling. How do I prep the tile to repaint it?

ashbourne

A: For the same reason you need to repaint, you shouldn't. Use a paint stripper to take it down to bare tile, or refinish if you don't like what's there. Otherwise, you're negating the benefits of tile in the first place.

C Ed Wright, Member

join the TOH community at

advice.thisoldhouse.com

This Old House.com

STEP-BY-STEP
WEEKEND
PROJECT SERIES



Tiling a Fireplace Surround

by JENNIFER STIMPSON PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROLAN SMITH

COST: \$400 to \$1,500

TIME: 4 days

DIFFICULTY: Moderate

Requires extensive tile work to prep the wall and floor.

TOOLS: Jackhammer with

metal mixing paddle

to break out tile, trowel

to mix mortar, level

2-foot level

Circular saw

with cutting disc

to cut floor tile, wet saw

to cut floor tile, wet saw

to cut floor tile, wet saw

to cut floor tile, wet saw

to cut floor tile, wet saw

to cut floor tile, wet saw

to cut floor tile, wet saw

to cut floor tile, wet saw

THE TIME FOR THESE EXPOSED BRICKS HAVING your fireplace, with their pocket faces and rustic finish, is long past. Night by night fire peacefully warmed for a glass of Chablis and the soothing sounds of Elton John. Now you're more about dinner parties and family holidays in front of the hearth. But before you go at the bricks with a pneumatic and some white emulsion, consider the more elegant cover-up of an idea.

Tiling a fireplace surround isn't a quick makeover, but in The Old House series' individual editor Mark Powers shows on the following pages, it will work the other. In a few days, you can upgrade the front of your home, taking it from date-night club to elegant centerpiece spot, ready to impress.

Accent tile: Fishbowl field tile in Richland Gap
built from Missouri Tile, \$1.10 per square foot; mohr.com

FOR COUPON, TV INTERVIEWS,
TURN THE PAGE AND UNFOLD

With an underground propane tank,
all you'll ever see is the
comfort it brings to your home.

With underground propane tanks, you can get the gas appliances you really want — and curb appeal. The tanks range in size from 120 to 1,000 gallons, can be installed easily underground and last for decades. The only visible sign is a small dome above ground for refilling and servicing. Propane cooktop, furnace, fireplace, and water heater inside, beautiful yard outside. See how an underground propane tank can add to the enjoyment of your home at usepropane.com



PROPANE
EXCEPTIONAL ENERGY





overview

A FLAWLESS FIREPLACE SURROUND starts with a well thought-out design and ends with an eye for even spacing. Depending on the tile you use, the design may be as simple as centering the starting position, as with subway tile, or as complicated as spacing decorative tile in the middle of a field, as with accent art tile.

Many art tile manufacturers will custom-make their tile to match your surround. But regardless of which tile you use, you'll save a lot of time by making a cardboard template of your surround so that you can lay out a pattern on the floor, space the tiles appropriately, and choose a starting pattern before committing everything to the fireplace itself.

Start by laying some of tiles on the template where the top of the firebox would be, beginning with the center tile and working outward from there. Then you can see if you need to adjust the tiles to avoid cutting any slivers at the ends. On the legs of your surround, plan to use full tiles in the field and leave any cuts at the bottom.

Whenever you tile a vertical surface, you have to start from the bottom row and work your way up. For the field above the firebox opening, you'll need to screw a piece of wood to the brick to provide support for the heavy tiles while they set. At the bottom of the legs, you'll have to estimate the size of the last cut tile and use a piece of wood for a level starting point that keeps the joints lined up from leg to leg.

Keep in mind that tiling requires you to work quickly, and while tile spacers are helpful, it may be necessary to go back before the thinset grout and slightly cheat the tiles one way or another to make them fit perfectly with their neighbors. As long as your joints look even, it's more important that you avoid a large grout line at the last tile than worry about sticking to the exact measurement of the spacer.

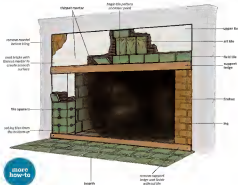


ILLUSTRATION BY
SHEEROY HEMES

shopping list

1 | TILE Available through manufacturers, specialty shops or home centers in a wide variety of materials. For most home tile or stone you can calculate the approximate square footage of your surround and multiply by 10 percent more tiles than needed to account for cuts and breakage. When working with art tile, many manufacturers will create a custom pattern and make sure that you'll get your desired design in a measured drawing at your request.

2 | THINSET MORTAR Look for special-duty thinset for wall applications, such as Laticrete Strong-Bond. A 50-pound bag will cover approximately 100 square feet.

3 | LATEX ADDITIVE An optional tile latex additive is used to create a stronger bond.

4 | 1x6 LUMBER To create support ledges for the upper field tiles and the bottom legs of the wings.

5 | 2-INCH MASONRY SCREWS To attach the support ledges to the bricks.

6 | TILE SPACERS To separate the tiles evenly and keep them from sliding down while the thinset cures. The size of your joints can vary based on the tile. A 3/16-inch spacer will work for most, but some require 1/8 inch or 1/4 inch. Buy plastic spacers or make your own from cardboard.

7 | GROUT In the space between your tiles will be greater than 1/8 inch, you'll need sand or grout. Test your mortar for sand content.

8 | SANDED ACETIC CAULK is usually available from the grout manufacturer in a matching color.

step-by-step

1

Create a smooth surface

Remove the mortar if possible or mask off the edges with painter's tape where it meets the surround.

If you're filling over brick or any other uneven surface, you will need to create a smooth base for your tiles. Using a 3/8-inch flat trowel, mix a batch of thinset mortar with the latex additive, following the directions on the packaging.

Using a finishing trowel, spread an even layer of thinset over the bricks to cover them and fill the grooves. Smooth the surface with the flat face of the trowel (RIGHT). Let the thinset dry overnight.

Properly edged thinset should be the consistency of peanut butter and will stick to a trowel when turned upside down.

TIP

Install a temporary support ledge

Mark the center of the top of the firebox opening. Using a level, draw a plumb line at the mark that extends from the firebox to the top of the surround. Use this center line as a starting point to ensure a balanced design.

Cut a 1x6 to fit the width of the surround. Position the 1x6 just below the top edge of the firebox opening and check it for level. If the ledge and the top of the firebox are not even, which they probably won't be, slightly lower the opening on one side rather than let it ride up on the other side. This will ensure that all of the surround will be covered when you install the tiles.

Using a drill-driver and 2-inch masonry screws, secure the wood at each end to the surround.



Set the upper-field tiles

Mix up a new batch of thinset and additive. Using the flat edge of the trowel, apply a horizontal band of the wet mortar to the center below the support ledge. Score the 1/8-inch by scoring the attached edge of the trowel throughout at an angle.

Position the first tile at the center line, with 1/8-inch edge resting on the support ledge. Tap it with the back of a trowel if it isn't fully set.

Continue placing tiles on either side of the center, alternating left and right. Periodically check the tiles for level and joints and be sure all the tiles are flush with one another. Spacing them even adjusts the spacing between them when necessary.

Lay the rest of the field. Work your way up the center line, course by course, keeping the joints staggered by alternating the direction of the tiles with the center line (INSET). Place an 1x6 across the way pattern the spaces between the courses. Lay the tiles set overnight.

When dealing with art tiles that have irregular shapes, use pieces of cardboard as spacers.

TIP



more
how-to

Get also by also
instructions on
taking a look at
this house.com
showbooks



4

4 Tile the legs

Remove the support ledge. Taking into account the height of each tile plus a grout line, extend the top of the finished tile that will sit at the bottom of each leg. Unwrap another saw rip a 1x3—long enough to fit across the surround—so that height. Position it across the bottom of both legs and check for level. Score the strip in place. If you can, rotate the inner edges of the finished rip to meet the 1x3 support pieces to fit those spaces and screw them in place.

Starting on one leg, apply the cut above the 1x3 and notch it with the biscuit. Set the laid tiles along this leg, working from the bottom up and staggering the joints, as you did with the upper side (LEFT). Tile the other leg in the same manner. Wait a few hours until all the tiles are firmly set.

TIP ▶ As you work, periodically clean the tiles and joints with a damp cloth to remove excess. Wipe off before it hardens.



5

Set the out tiles

Remove the sawers and the support ledges.

Measure the distance up from the hearth to the bottom of the tiles. Subtract the width of two grout lines. Using a wet, cutting tile saw, trim a tile to this measurement.

Butter the back of the tile with the notched edge of the tile with the biscuit. On larger tiles, cut the notched edge of the biscuit over the biscuit. Push the tile into place and wedge it until it holds against the wall evenly spaced between the hearth and the tile above (RIGHT). Repeat this process for the other three cut tiles at the base of the legs. Allow these to set overnight.



6 Grout the tile

Using a stiff knife, clean away any excess of tile-set slush between the tiles. Place another a tape over the tiles that have irregularly shaped surfaces in preparation for grouting.

Using the dry-d-floor filled with a mixing paddle, mix the grout according to the manufacturer's instructions. Using a grout float held at an angle, pull the grout across the face of the tiles to pack it into the joints (LEFT). Then turn the float on its edge and pull it diagonally across the grout lines to remove the excess from the face of the tiles. To grout the set tiles, load the mix into a grout bag and squeeze it into the joints (RIGHT).

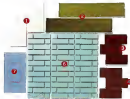
Let the grout dry for 30 to 60 minutes or until firm to the touch. Dampen a grout sponge and squeeze it flat in a circular motion to clean off the excess. Let the grout dry overnight.

Using a clean cloth, buff the face of the tiles to remove the white haze. Wipe off this whitening haze with a grout-to-tile brush between the outer edge of the tile and the mortar's inner edge. Allow the tiles to cure for another two or three days before building a fire.

TIP ▶ Mix the grout with a spray bottle occasionally to keep it from drying out too fast.

buying guide

As a focal point, a fireplace can set the tone for the whole style of a room. Rough brick can pull rustic spaces together, while smooth glass can be used to set a modern tone. Here are a few of our favored designs, which are sure to break an eye-catching centerpiece in any environment.

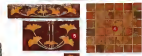
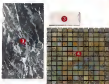


CERAMIC and GLASS

- 1. Ceramic subway 1, New Miami White
- 2. Glass subway 2, Marine Blue
- 3. Marine Blue 3, Marine Blue 4, Agitation
- 4. New Miami 5, New Miami 6, New Miami 7, New Miami 8, New Miami 9, New Miami 10, New Miami 11, New Miami 12, New Miami 13, New Miami 14, New Miami 15, New Miami 16, New Miami 17, New Miami 18, New Miami 19, New Miami 20, New Miami 21, New Miami 22, New Miami 23, New Miami 24, New Miami 25, New Miami 26, New Miami 27, New Miami 28, New Miami 29, New Miami 30, New Miami 31, New Miami 32, New Miami 33, New Miami 34, New Miami 35, New Miami 36, New Miami 37, New Miami 38, New Miami 39, New Miami 40, New Miami 41, New Miami 42, New Miami 43, New Miami 44, New Miami 45, New Miami 46, New Miami 47, New Miami 48, New Miami 49, New Miami 50, New Miami 51, New Miami 52, New Miami 53, New Miami 54, New Miami 55, New Miami 56, New Miami 57, New Miami 58, New Miami 59, New Miami 60, New Miami 61, New Miami 62, New Miami 63, New Miami 64, New Miami 65, New Miami 66, New Miami 67, New Miami 68, New Miami 69, New Miami 70, New Miami 71, New Miami 72, New Miami 73, New Miami 74, New Miami 75, New Miami 76, New Miami 77, New Miami 78, New Miami 79, New Miami 80, New Miami 81, New Miami 82, New Miami 83, New Miami 84, New Miami 85, New Miami 86, New Miami 87, New Miami 88, New Miami 89, New Miami 90, New Miami 91, New Miami 92, New Miami 93, New Miami 94, New Miami 95, New Miami 96, New Miami 97, New Miami 98, New Miami 99, New Miami 100

SPECIALTY

- 1. Hand-painted stone tile, PG Impulse border P4
- 2. San Sebastian pattern 1, San Sebastian 2, San Sebastian 3, San Sebastian 4, San Sebastian 5, San Sebastian 6, San Sebastian 7, San Sebastian 8, San Sebastian 9, San Sebastian 10, San Sebastian 11, San Sebastian 12, San Sebastian 13, San Sebastian 14, San Sebastian 15, San Sebastian 16, San Sebastian 17, San Sebastian 18, San Sebastian 19, San Sebastian 20, San Sebastian 21, San Sebastian 22, San Sebastian 23, San Sebastian 24, San Sebastian 25, San Sebastian 26, San Sebastian 27, San Sebastian 28, San Sebastian 29, San Sebastian 30, San Sebastian 31, San Sebastian 32, San Sebastian 33, San Sebastian 34, San Sebastian 35, San Sebastian 36, San Sebastian 37, San Sebastian 38, San Sebastian 39, San Sebastian 40, San Sebastian 41, San Sebastian 42, San Sebastian 43, San Sebastian 44, San Sebastian 45, San Sebastian 46, San Sebastian 47, San Sebastian 48, San Sebastian 49, San Sebastian 50, San Sebastian 51, San Sebastian 52, San Sebastian 53, San Sebastian 54, San Sebastian 55, San Sebastian 56, San Sebastian 57, San Sebastian 58, San Sebastian 59, San Sebastian 60, San Sebastian 61, San Sebastian 62, San Sebastian 63, San Sebastian 64, San Sebastian 65, San Sebastian 66, San Sebastian 67, San Sebastian 68, San Sebastian 69, San Sebastian 70, San Sebastian 71, San Sebastian 72, San Sebastian 73, San Sebastian 74, San Sebastian 75, San Sebastian 76, San Sebastian 77, San Sebastian 78, San Sebastian 79, San Sebastian 80, San Sebastian 81, San Sebastian 82, San Sebastian 83, San Sebastian 84, San Sebastian 85, San Sebastian 86, San Sebastian 87, San Sebastian 88, San Sebastian 89, San Sebastian 90, San Sebastian 91, San Sebastian 92, San Sebastian 93, San Sebastian 94, San Sebastian 95, San Sebastian 96, San Sebastian 97, San Sebastian 98, San Sebastian 99, San Sebastian 100

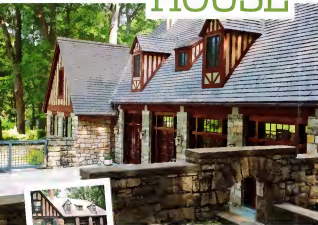


STONE

- 1. Marble 1, Polaris, \$22-\$27
- 2. Polar Grey
- 3. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 4. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 5. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 6. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 7. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 8. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 9. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 10. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 11. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 12. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 13. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 14. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 15. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 16. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 17. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 18. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 19. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 20. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 21. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 22. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 23. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 24. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 25. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 26. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 27. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 28. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 29. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 30. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 31. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 32. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 33. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 34. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 35. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 36. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 37. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 38. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 39. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 40. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 41. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 42. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 43. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 44. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 45. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 46. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 47. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 48. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 49. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 50. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 51. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 52. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 53. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 54. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 55. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 56. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 57. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 58. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 59. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 60. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 61. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 62. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 63. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 64. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 65. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 66. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 67. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 68. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 69. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 70. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 71. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 72. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 73. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 74. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 75. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 76. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 77. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 78. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 79. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 80. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 81. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 82. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 83. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 84. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 85. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 86. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 87. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 88. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 89. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 90. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 91. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 92. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 93. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 94. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 95. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 96. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 97. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 98. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 99. \$22-\$24, unisite.com
- 100. \$22-\$24, unisite.com

*All prices are per square foot, except where noted

FROM CARRIAGE HOUSE



EXTERIOR Originally part of a sugar-beet estate and built for his staff and brother, the Tabor carriage house already had a handsome, rustic stone facade and half-timbered corners. The owners, James and Diane Murphy, swapped out its four garage doors (right) for French doors with transoms.



GREAT ROOM Inside, a new giraffe went from car park to giraffe control with white-painted V-groove paneling installed over the old panel in its walls (right). A custom-painted, barnwood oak flooring and vintage-style light fixtures further refitted the 25-by-45-foot space.



TO COZY HOME

They wanted a **vintage home with a lofty interior** for entertaining.

They found it in a 1916 outbuilding with a **crowd-pleasing open plan**

by Kelly Swanson, photographs by Paul Whitehouse, produced by Caleigh Scanlon, styling by Patrick Grayler



It's not often that the words open plan and vintage home are paired

in the same real-estate listing. But that's just what Denise and James Murphy, serial old-house owners, were hoping for when they decided to downsize.

After living in a sprawling 18th-century farmhouse, with six cramped rooms and stacked downspouts, and with three daughters grown and on her own, they were looking for a place with a modern, open plan where they could host casual weekend and holiday get-togethers. They would happily give up some square footage for the right mix of relaxed great-room gathering space

and original period detail. "I know it might seem incongruous to love old houses but still want an almost hillside space," says Denise, "but that's what we dreamed of."

Knowing that such a combo would be hard to find, the couple widened their search to vintage outbuildings, including barns and carriage houses, that would need converting. And there's how they came upon the place that instantly captivatedly imagination: a 1,500-square-foot 1916 Tudor-style carriage house with a four-bay garage taking up most of its first floor.

While the prospect of transforming an old garage into a contemporary living space was daunting, the carriage house presented precisely the architectural appeal and open-plan potential they were looking for. Along with its patinaque facade of local fieldstone and half-timbering, it offered a relaxed, rustic setting in Roselandville, New Jersey. And it already had some living space (several of the upstairs servants' quarters—three bedrooms, a kitchen, and a bath—as well as a mechanic's workshop and a chauffeur's office downstairs).

Much of the place had remained untouched over the years, including the garage space and the chauffeur's office, which was lined with drawers filled built-in with glass-front cabinets that once held sugar-related paperwork. There were also the



FLOOR PLANS

The garage space (shown on open left) was gutted/plastered over. The office and workshop became a library and a formal dining room, respectively. Openers: three bedrooms, a master bathroom, a walk-in closet, and a larger master bath, and a kitchen were tucked into a former office. The master bedroom (shown on right) holds a fireplace stacked over the one below downstairs.



MAIN FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



KITCHEN

Storage filled built-ins who scored the cemented refrigerator. The island, now with new limestone countertop, was a wood-burner at the mechanic's shop. The outback boards at each end (right) were made from remnants of the bench a original scored maple top. OPPOSITE: Tall pottery cabinets were also salvaged from the workshop, where they were built-in. The new copper lighting fixtures were as it wished to give them an aged patina.

CONVERTING A GARAGE

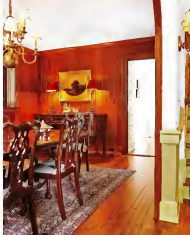
Who wouldn't want to gain a guest or rec room without having to add on? While the Murphys' 2006 garage formed handsome bones, with its new fireplace and wood paneling, is definitely on the deluxe side, the couple had to make many of the same basic decisions as any homeowner looking to out the family room and take over its quarters. Here are some fundamental considerations in tackling such a conversion.

FIX THE FLOOR A concrete slab with no major cracks can be one of a garage's biggest bonuses. A floating wood floor or carpeting can go right over it. Just be sure the first couple of planks with a dig sawer seal floor cracks with a filler and put down a vapor barrier. The Murphys could have left them if they hadn't needed to use new kitchen plumbing and blithe machines a lot.

FINISH THE WALLS The Murphys placed brick walls were an unattractive find, so when contractor Wayne Elmer built stud walls in front of them he attached them to the ceiling rather than drive fasteners directly into the masonry. Most masonry walls don't require such finesse—just regular stud walls, insulation and drywall. Even garages that already have finished walls may lack insulation in that case, blown-in insulation will do a lot to fix the wall.

FILL THE OPENINGS The Murphys replaced their garage doors with energy-efficient French doors and transoms that fit the openings. When that's not preferred or desirable—where the doors flow along street, for instance—openings can be closed with framing and finished with drywall and siding. For a historical accurate look on a pre-1940s home, carriage doors can be modified to preserve the facade and a wall built inside. Old windows are usually replaced with energy-efficient ones.

UPGRADE THE SYSTEMS If you have a forced-air system, extending the ductwork to the garage space is the cheapest way to install heat, followed by electric baseboards. With the latter, though, expect your monthly utility bill to take more of a hit. If you are replacing the slab, consider adding a much more robust system that evens plastic tubing to hot water in the concrete. It's the top choice for heating a big room, evenly says Elmer. People mind that any system that uses hot water or steam requires running new pipe to your existing boiler, even if your garage is glorified for laundry or a utility sink. To add wiring without disturbing the brick walls here Elmer drilled it through hollow ceiling joists and behind wall paneling. If drywall is already in place, you'll need to cut holes to make new wiring and add outlets. In that case, consider finishing the walls with vinyl or paint. Along with covering the holes, you'll give a nice detail.



workshop, with its handsome wood paneling and lockets. The workshop also housed another treasure: a 20-foot-long single-topped built-in workbench with a nice sized panes. The Murphys were soon putting it to use in their kitchen island. The open room—the previous owner's bachelor quarters—will hold their original remodeled two, custom windows, and Douglas fir floor.

Best of all, the garage space—a 23-by-43-foot area fronted by four garage doors—was an 11-foot ceiling and an exterior wall to put in the way of the couple's planned kitchen remodeling. "It's their money's worth," says the couple's local kitchen designer Joan Preece says of her reaction when the couple brought her in to look at it. She became part of a renovation team that would ultimately include project designer Edith C. Hinkle, then of Hilford Hall Turner Associates, and contractor Wayne Elmer, all three hired to configure the open plan and overhaul the other rooms.

The garage was in a pretty raw state. Originally built to a sugar house's Model T, it was lined with structural white-glazed brick, and its oil-stained concrete floor came complete with a mechanic's pit.

But the couple already knew what they wanted it to look like. They'd would hold the kitchen, the new remodeling area, and the last two parking areas with a new wood-burning fireplace.

But first Elmer had to prehammer up the floor and pour a new concrete slab, filling in the pit. This allowed him to replace the old galvanized and cast-iron pipes with copper and PVC. Changing the plumbing also gave them a chance

DINING ROOM

The paneled workshop became a formal dining room with a grand archway opening the original 32-inch wide doorway to the foyer and front stairs.

LIBRARY

The chauffeur's office came with built-in drawers and well-preserved glass-fronted cabinets, which now hold the homeowners' book and book collection.



SEATING AREA

A cement-topped fireplace mirrors any line of the old garage (DSMT). It also helps drive the expensive drive for finding and installing within the space plan.



"Divided-light windows flatter old houses. Panes equal period style." —DAVE MURPHY, HOMEOWNER

to switch from the old, lanky radiators to a radiant-floor heating system.

As the renovation began to take shape, the couple faced a dilemma over its white-glazed bricks. "They were incredible as bricks, so no one really wanted them to come down," says Dione. "But ultimately the homeowners felt they were too cold. You need painting to make a space this large feel cozy."

To warm up the walls and keep the bricks, too, she decided to leave the range wall intact as a backsplash and hide the rest behind white-painted V-groove panelling. There's both new wood walls in front of the brick, meaning there's no ceiling so they could be taken down if the owners ever changed their mind.

The designers also wanted to preserve the existing plaster ceiling, which had survived the years without water damage or cracks. So they added coffeing to make it seem less weak and to build new wiring and ductwork.

The garage door openings were filled with French doors and transoms that now open onto a gravel courtyard, and dusty double-hung windows were replaced with energy-efficient models that match the originals in style.

Upstairs, the design is aimed the master bedroom's 11-foot ceiling to 15 feet, at its peak, by tapping steel truss space and exposing the rafters. They added a beamspace with two bay windows and window seats on either side of the new fireplace, which is stacked above the one added downstairs. They also rehinged the existing bath by taking out two closets. An adjacent bedroom became a walk-in linen closet. The remaining one was kept as a guest room, and the old kitchen was turned into Dione's home office, a full bath, and a laundry area.

As with any renovation, there were setbacks. The cross-hatched fireplace was so damaged with motor-oil residue that burn marks from soldering guns that it needed a new top. And it was so large that to fit it into the new kitchen, carpenters had to cut it down to 13 feet in length and to counter height, then alter the drawers to accommodate two sinks. The homeowners did catch some breaks, too. The office needed almost no work to become a library, and the painted workshop was easily converted to a formal dining room, its wooden lockers installed in the new kitchen as pantry cabinets.

The walls ended up taking two years, which included building a new detached garage. But all that time and effort paid off. "When the couple's daughter arrives with her husband and 13-month-old, a home spent takes hold. French joints, gathering in the high-ceilinged open beamspace and spilling over into the small nooks."

"We got a great place for a big gang of friends and family," says Dione. "You can get cozy and watch the fire going at one end and still be in the same room with the cook at the other. I can't think of a better way, or place, to spend the holidays." ■

MASTER BEDROOM

By exposing the steel truss and adding rafters to help support attic space, the couple raised the ceiling and exposed the exposed rafters. Some of them were so dark that contractors had to stain them to match the rest of the house and use the rafters to enhance the decorative effect. To give their space a bumpout with bay windows was constructed off one end of the house. The fireplace was built to match the original chimney at the other end of the house. The granite fireplace and the kitchen island and bench are custom by Art Deco style.



MASTER BATH

The master bath was a mix of old and new, featuring its two closets making space for a double vanity side and to match existing vanity elsewhere in the house.



Full featured replacement for built down at BuiltDown.com Alberta

Under-the-Radar RETAILERS

Stealth SUPPLIERS

Money-Saving SCORES

TOH reveals its 2008
SECRET SOURCES
guide to products and services
you won't find at the home center

Welcome to our biggest, baddest (as in profit) annual guide to the little-known stores and resources that'll transform your house into a home like no other on your block. To create it, we tapped experts, both here at The Old House and among the magazine's well-known as well as a few capably unknown—to point us to those specialty products and services that are life-savers when you're tackling a DIY project or need professional fix-up help. We've rounded up our list of favorites, including a builder's referral who'll rescue your vintage chair from a no-paints-are-acceptable'll ruin your K&P duties, and we're excited to spread the word! Like you, we're all pretty budget-conscious these days, so we've included some special (pennypinching editors') budget picks for your own old-house bonanza again. There, in the spirit of giving, peace it is.

STYLING: LEE PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIAN BLATCH



Doors are used for vintage knobs in new doors. P. 74



Custom-painted lanterns in switch plate boxes. P. 52



Shelved glass knobs in up your house a cut appeal. P. 76



Fabric-covered outlets for multi-line repair. P. 74



Lightly patterned curtains add color to walls and floors. P. 72

N^o 17 Historic Properties

Thicksettle Angles
were built by the
Harris family in
Virginia nearly 100
years ago.



DIY Kits

13. Fireplace Face-Lift Decorative Concepts

If a DIY project is called handy and can be done in a weekend, it's a must-have. So, if you're a handy homeowner, you'll want to try it. Up next, installing a fireplace mantel like this one from Decorative Concepts, which will use to update the focal point of his living room. To keep prices low, there's assembly required, but nothing that can't be done with a drill/driver, wood glue, brackets, and a saw. This kit comes with everything you need for the job, including a full-size mantel and a variety of wood species including oak, walnut, and alder. The kit costs \$157.95, including shipping and handling.

14. Tool Storage System Wall Control

When the still alive, no doubt! It's a kit that would be a great addition to any home. The kit includes a full-size mantel and a variety of wood species including oak, walnut, and alder. The kit costs \$157.95, including shipping and handling.

15. Sleeper in a Box Create-A-Bed

Put up Murphy bed, the perfect solution for creating double-duty rooms, but prebuilt systems can be really pricey. Zachry's never stop 70H master Murphy Coffer, whose interior Los Angeles bungalow was featured in our December 2006 issue. He built his own using a kit from Create-A-Bed in Louisville, Kentucky. Included in the basic kit is the motor-operated mechanism



Kit 13:
Decorative Concepts
mantel kit.

which lowers the bed to open and close. (D.O. instructions and a full-size blueprint for designing your own enclosure. Coffer built his using out of MDF from the lumberyard. \$299, create-a-bed.com

16. Furniture Server H. Babin's Master Delivery Kit

Full of the same look—furniture, servers, grilling pans and spray finishes—that some furniture-delivery guys use to make in transit damage. The H. Babin's Master Delivery Kit is a great way to get your furniture delivered safely to your home.

18. Antiquing 411 EstateSales.net

Estate sales are a great spot for snagging vintage home furnishings at low prices, but finding good ones used to be tough. That's until formerly frustrated scavenger Dan McGee created an online directory where sellers could post

Queen Anne, and Colonial furniture in San Diego. (Oh, House!) Many come straight from vendors and local pawnshops, so of course, but consider the effort and time. Some items are also sold from the maker's daughter, a son of Sharon Hixon and Marjorie Hixon. Their website is available for searching for small house. A recent search of the site showed 130 properties around the country listed for less than \$100,000, including a half-acre lot for just \$1.40 per square foot.

20. Online Bargain Search Craig's Helper

Created the online community bulletin board is a multi-state seller. Dan Sander's mission was to help buyers find a variety of home stuff, including much of her outdoor furniture. But until recently, searching for what she needed was a pretty painful process. A comment from a savvy reader on the thread was a message board posted her to a site that it is to you. It's a great place to find the best bargains around the country. craighelper.com

Services

17. Old-House Finder HistoricProperties.com

Over wonder how we find all these remarkable—and, not to be confused with—Craigslist

deleted listings and photos of the windows that last buyers like them could cherry-pick when to list their houses.

19. Utility-Bill Saver Zero Energy Design

A couple of entrepreneurs, Cornell University grads, look what they learned working in the Department of Energy's 2005 Solar Decathlon and founded a consulting firm that helps homeowners save money by lowering their energy bills. Based on your particular home's schematics, Zero Energy Design recommends efficiency, basic improvements and works with local contractors to calculate what it'll cost to make them at your area. For new construction, energy savings are 30 to 50 percent. Reports from \$4,000 a year, zeroenergy.com

20. Online Bargain Search Craig's Helper

Created the online community bulletin board is a multi-state seller. Dan Sander's mission was to help buyers find a variety of home stuff, including much of her outdoor furniture. But until recently, searching for what she needed was a pretty painful process. A comment from a savvy reader on the thread was a message board posted her to a site that it is to you. It's a great place to find the best bargains around the country. craighelper.com



Kit 16:
H. Babin's Master
Delivery Kit.

Vintage-Look FIXTURES

31. Gracious Grilles Raggo Registers

Mike Raggo has been crafting top-quality grilles and registers for casual air-heating systems for 30 years. In addition to brass and iron grilles in traditional geometric patterns fit for an estate, Raggo produces a contemporary grid design in aluminum or zinc with one of an Art Deco Revival Wood grille in red or white oak, maple, or cherry are also available. From \$28 for a 24 by 36-inch metal grille. raggoregister.com



No. 31
Raggo Register and Iron grille.

designed by Dr. Kasper, the vast majority can be wired for LED bulbs. The new lamping technology is far more energy-efficient than compact fluorescent. All of Eltek's fixtures are handcrafted in the company's Portland, Oregon, factory. The Art Nouveau-inspired Illuminati, which is just over 50 percent recycled brass and adorned with a handblown glass globe (P001 0995010) is \$100. eltek.com

34. No-Sleek Sink Taps DEA Bathroom Machinery

The individual hot and cold taps on many vintage bathroom sinks make for handsome face washing. The water is either burning hot or freezing cold. DEA Bathroom Machinery in Murphy, California, solves the old-fashioned faucet problem with a bridge adapter that spans the distance between the two taps and raises the water to your desired temperature. Based on an original 1908 design, the bridge faucet comes in various lengths to fit a number of sink styles and sizes. About \$330. deafb.com

Custom ORDERS

35. Coordinating Appliances Colors Elmco Slave Works

If you want uniform style in your kitchen, Elmco's Tom Hendrick is your guy. For 32 years, he's been designing appliances that recall bygone eras but don't compromise the latest technology. The Ontario, Canada, company's Elmco Slave Works, which takes you back to the Eisenhower years, can even be custom ordered in just about any color to make your kitchen look unique. Choose from the hand-painted human figure's durable finish. Elmco's custom paintline. Custom paint a \$300 plus the cost of the fridge or range. elmcoslaveworks.com

36. Lights to Match Your Paint Job Oliver Electric Co.

Oliver Electric Co., South Carolina, likes to match

colors in their lighting. It's not a hard sell. The company's lights are made from a variety of materials and can be custom painted in any color. The company's lights are made from a variety of materials and can be custom painted in any color. The company's lights are made from a variety of materials and can be custom painted in any color.



Elmco Slave Works

32. French Door Decore Vico Morris

Land your French doors even more fun with a Euro-style ornate ball. The surface "ornate" look affects long rods in opposite directions to secure door—or casement window—at its top and bottom. Vico Morris offers a dazzling array of nearly 20 different knobs and decorative handles for its balls, more than 30 hand-polished finishes. You can even order an exterior version that can be locked from the outside with a key. From \$125. vicomorris.com

33. Period Green Lighting Globe Inc.

Some of today's most high-tech and eco-friendly lighting comes in surprisingly low-tech packaging. Of these, more than 100 fixtures



No. 34
DEA Bathroom Machinery "bridge" faucet for vintage sinks.



No. 35
Elmco Slave Works custom painted refrigerator.

paint, or number. Sources start at \$295. elmcoslaveworks.com

37. Range Hoods, Your Way Vent-A-Hood

The granddaddy of domestic range hoods has a custom hood choice that's been a sleeper—until now. You draw it. They'll build it. says Vent-A-Hood's Michael Ford of the craftsperson in the company's custom department in Richardson.

Texts: Many of the artisans have been in the industry for 30 years, graduates of an apprentice training program the company still maintains. Hoods made of copper are increasingly popular, either in particularity get the whole house treatment, so easy. Can't spring for a whole-of-kind hood? Customers as well as the shelf-model with hand, metal, pot, and even a custom shelf. From \$3,000. ventahood.com



No. 36
Globe Inc. custom painted brass globe with hand-painted globe.

Repair

or

Replace

Everything breaks, eventually. TOH helps you decide if it's worth your time—and money—to bust out the tool kit for a quick fix or start shopping for something new.

Sure, shiny new granite countertops would make your Christmas. But let's face it: They're expensive, and you've got more pressing home-improvement tasks to deal with—the buckling tiles in your shower, saggy or the drafty front door, or even that hot-water-hogging dishwasher. Given today's slumping real estate market—and the fact that one-third of American houses are now more than 45 years old and need TLC—new studies show you'll reap better financial returns by investing in midrange repair and replacement projects than by paying up for the high-end cosmetic upgrades favored before the downturn. Factor in fixes that boost your home's energy efficiency and you'll recoup even more. But first, of course, you need to weigh the short-term cost against the long-term benefits. Here, *The Old House* does the math on 10 common concerns.

Kitchen Appliances

Energy savings at one cut: partly replacing a subpar stove or dishwasher. **Repair:** *Upgrading a refrigerator built before 2001 for a new Energy Star model, for instance, could cut your annual energy usage by 48 percent. And a new dishwasher with the eco-friendly seal will use 41 percent less energy to operate than its unsealed aunt because it has less water to heat. Next year's models also prove even more efficient: Energy Star will award top-tier awards for dishwashers on January 1, and a review of refrigerator qualifications. If your appliances are noticeably inefficient but look decent, consider a DIY makeover. Paint from Topco Design (fridgepaint.com), which costs in stainless steel, would match your cabinets, and even magnetic chalkboard, start at \$399 for the fridge and \$99 for the dishwasher. You can trim fridge energy costs yourself by installing a new door gasket (order one from the manufacturer) to give you a tighter seal so that cooled air won't escape. You can also save by cranking up its thermostat to a safe 38 degrees F and the freezer to 0 degrees F.*

Replace: If the price of new units can be offset by long-term energy savings.

Investing in an all-in-one kitchen island with a new Energy Star model could not only add value to your property but also save you money over the long haul.



By Steve Rothman Illustrations by Nick Dewar



"Our friends
told us we were

CRAZY"

The roof leaked, the plaster was peeling, and the foundation had racked out of square. No matter. One look at the dilapidated 1926 foursquare—smack in the middle of beach-condo country—sealed the deal for this couple.

BY PAT HALL, HOMEOWNER / PHOTOGRAPHS BY GENE FOLLOK

WE WEREN'T IN THE DOOR FIVE MINUTES (before I turned to my wife and said, "We have to buy this house.") The front porch was falling in, the eaves would leak, the condition was awful, truly awful, but every original window, door, piece of hardware, and light fixture was still there. The truth is, Judy and I hadn't even been looking for a house, but we agreed the contest that night.

I'm a contractor—started out installing garage doors—and, from time to time, a local estate agent will call me up and say, "Will you come by and look at this house?" I don't know if it's worth working with.

That's what happened that day, and knowing it was an old house, I brought Judy along. I'd have been available if I hadn't, as she's an avid preservationist. For Sarasota locals and bird and know all about the housing stock in this area of Florida, so when I first drove by and saw this American foursquare, in a landscaped part of town without an awning or sliding door in sight, I knew we'd be tempted.

Whether it's rare to find an unaltered circa 1926 house in Florida anymore. And this isn't your typical contractor. It was built by a wealthy merchant, Benjamin McCull, who had also worked as a carpenter foreman in the construction of the Panama Canal. It's said that he designed his new house himself, choosing a foursquare shape and mostly Craftsman design and construction techniques, which was popular in Florida at the time. He customized the house with a low-pitched hip roof, large square porch supports, and Calceolaria (Burrell



1970s. The canal in front porch showed that when homeowners Judy and Pat built 1926 FOURSQUARE, they had to add the back door. After following good work, the couple renovated the original 2 1/2-story porch and new addition. The rest of the second story—except for the porch—was gutted and replaced with new 36 inches high for today.



BEFORE The existing kitchen (shown here) barely changed for 40 years, but the rest of the house was the worst. **AFTER** The bathroom bumped out 4 feet and gave the space an updated look.

for light and tidier lines in time. McGill had sprung for the best, because when I started stripping off some of the rotting 1-by-8-inch clapboards I could see they were adobe wood, stamped "Humboldt County, California." It's hard to believe that in those days they shipped claps all the way from the West Coast.

The house had only had two owners after McGill's wife passed away in 1960. And her 13-year-old daughter-in-law was still living behind us when we moved in. She had old black-and-white photos of our house and plenty of memories of what it used to look like, which helped us return it to its original condition.

Our friends thought we were crazy. Just say: Our plan was to restore the 2,300-square-foot house and put up a 600-square-foot addition. During the first six months of permits and working with the Sonoma Historic Preservation Board, we lived in our existing home and worked on the new one nights and weekends. Then we sold the old house, rented for another six months, and finally moved into the four-square.

The first thing I did was put the ladder and buffer seal into some walls to check for water damage. At that point I realized the north end of the house was sagging and had settled about two inches, so I got some 20-ton jacks and bridge members and jacked it up. Then I crawled underneath and took the concrete-block foundation apart. Everything was going fine until a shaking stopped and landed me on the side, but I was lucky I didn't get more than a bad bruise. I finished replacing the foundation and left those bridge members in place for extra support.

To tackle the water-damaged perimeter walls, I had to

take off all the plaster and lath and pull out the rotting studs with rippers. Scared like there were millions of them I had already decided that we would replace. Drywall would have been a lot cheaper, but there's no comparison. So I resanded and hung Sheetrock, which is moisture resistant, and hired some pros who put up a brown and tan mesh over the white studs. It looks great.

Luckily, we were able to save the plaster on the interior walls, which the pros refaced. I like knowing that the original fabric of the house is still there.

It was no surprise that the house needed all new systems: plumbing, air-conditioning, heat, and electrical, all of which I subbed out. We also had to put on a new asphalt roof. There had been some water damage to the southern pine floors, but the last thing I wanted was shiny new ones. So I patched the really bad spots and sanded and stained all the boards with a tung oil finish. The floors have character, so say the least.

What I truly loved most about the house when we first saw it was that it had every one of its 44 original Craftsman-style four-over-one windows. So she made it her project to restore them. It took four months, but she took each one of the sash out of its original frame, removed the glass, then stripped, sanded, and repainted. I can tell you each cord and, in some cases, retail the frames. It seemed like a world never end.

Learn how

See how you can take on this project with a professional



AFTER The living room's architectural details, including the mantel, built-in bookcases, and French doors, required only dry fitting and touch painting.



AFTER The staircase just needed to be cleaned with a chemical solvent and waxed. "You can tell that the carpenter saved all the best pieces for it, and cut end grain by hand," says homeowner Pat Ball. **AFTER** Replacing the home's original windows helped the 600-square-foot back addition blend with the old house.

As much as we wanted to honor the old parts of the house, we also knew we needed more space, especially in the kitchen. So we bumped it out 4 feet and added a porch downstairs. Upstairs, we created a master suite, added a second bath, converted two bedrooms into an office, and put on a sleeping porch. We were careful to make the new exterior blend with the original house, creating in much of the adobe wood siding as possible. But for the new boards, and for the 30 percent of the old ones that had started and had to be replaced, I didn't use redwood. It costs \$4 a foot and would've had to come from California. Cypress, at \$1.30 a foot, worked just fine. We added a garage in the back, too. That became our workshop.

The last step was the landscape. I just wanted a native Florida garden, which requires little water, so we consulted a local horticulturist and started planting magnolias and palms.

It's been a lot of work, but we wouldn't trade the experience. It's not every day in Florida that you get to live in a house with history. ■

What We Did

Reconstructed and added a 1,200-square-foot house.

BUDGETING OVER \$100,000 which if we broke it down as much ourselves, would have been \$500,000.

SPENT 18-24 months from purchase to reconstruction. Permitted to finish historic materials. By using Armstrong vinyl tile in the kitchen—it cost just \$1 a square foot. That's a good deal!

NEVER WE DEFERRED on the remodeling—which in three times more expensive than drywall—and save. It takes water to build, which cost \$2,000 more than a regular one.

WHAT WE WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY Nothing. Honestly. Without us it found the house under.

OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE Rebuilding and restoring all 44 windows ourselves. **WE'VE SOLVED IT** By stretching it out over four months and trying the same 3/4" 32-ounce compound that was used 50 years ago.



Artisan

Tile

With

Style

ILLUSTRATION:
Factory photographs by
JAMES GARDNER
For Me by
ELLEN KAMENKORT

Heath Ceramics has been making tiles in vivid colors and distinctive shapes for half a century. Here's how its craftspeople transform humble lumps of clay into smooth building blocks that can brighten even the simplest interiors.



Old Techniques, New Tiles
Clay maker Tom Tran holds a block of clay made from the same earth mix developed by Heath Ceramics founder Edith Heath, more than 50 years ago. Skilled craftsman like Tran use both hand tools and vintage machinery to produce the tiles.

IT'S A THRIVING EXAMPLE of a dying breed: Heath Ceramics is one of the few remaining potteries in the U.S. that still manufactures original mid-century tile designs from the early 1960s, and even uses some of the same hand-painted equipment. Back then, the company's late founder, Edith Heath, produced original designs for renowned architects of the day including Eero Saarinen. These artisanal clay tiles are back in vogue among style-seeking homeowners. Whether in earthy red, steel blue, or vibrant magenta, the handcrafted look of the ceramics works with most any house style, be it an updated Italianate, a classic Craftsman bungalow, or an Arts and Crafts-style ranch. From porch to the tiles' subtle color variations and bathroom surfaces lead depth to kitchen backsplashes, bathroom walls, foyer floors, and fireplace surrounds.

Having set out to revive the company's fortunes by generating its remarkable past, present-day owners Robin Perouse and his wife, Catherine Bailey, continue to introduce new colors and tile molds. The original San Rafael, California, factory, where they have stumbled upon forgotten tile prototypes in dusty corners, provides much of the inspiration for their 200-employee product introduction. And it is there that a crew of 40 craftspeople produce just 700 square feet of tile a day. Visitors to the San Francisco Bay area can see how they do it on weekend factory tours. In the meantime, come along for an inside view on the pages that follow.



1 Extruding the Clay

Clay is tossed through a mill-filled with a square mesh. A clay meter then sorts individual brick-shaped beads for bachelors-only. Campaign founder Edith Health developed two signature recipes for her clay: brown-orange is an eco-mix made from nearby Sassafras roots and a white clay with ingredients from Florida. The dark orange clay is used primarily for earth-toned pieces, while the white typically underlies the brighter, lighter colors. Health dyes squares only a single time, at a temperature 200 degrees F lower: 1,000 instead of 1,200. She then forms the manufacturers' typically square pieces into a variety of shapes. The squares only half the energy of a full production piece, nongrass tiles that resist frosting: even in areas such as building exteriors and pool covers, such as swimming pool covers.

2—Forming the Blocks

After centering one of the city blocks on a hydraulic manometer, a crew member presses it to a uniform thickness. Presses are filled with dies that stamp out either flat tiles, such as squares, rectangles, and any mosaics, or one of the city's special ribbon shapes, including walls, triangles, bow ties, and diamonds.

3 Making the Cut

A crew member removes a flat of rebargrout from the vintage "cooler-cutter" machine fabricated by Edith Heath's late husband Brian. Its steel blades are changed out for different sizes. Turned here are 1 by 3-inches for mass installations. Workers trim away any excess clay by hand, then set the tiles aside to dry.



see
more
tile
designs

Find sales signs
to put your
name and
address at
**Practical Business
Communication**

4 Mixing Colors

A glass preserves the amount of colorants, additives, and ground minerals—cobalt for blue, copper for green. They're added to one of several glazing media. They vary depending on the finish but, in a nut shell, high glass is something a better-off Carls' client consistently experimented with glass chemistry and to deliver successors. Deussen and creative director Catherine Eddy recently created a custom glass to match tiles used in the restoration of a historic movie theater. Eighty-six custom tiles are available on the current line, with a few added or subtracted occasionally. Some of the old colors, including a 1950s sage, have been replaced with other, such as greens that required less calcium. Two have been abandoned in favor of more eco-friendly ingredients.

5 Applying the Class

Each glue is applied differently: some go on the joint thick. Wadding a spray gun attached to an air compressor a crew member applied color to a board of film set on a digital scale that measures glue per square inch to ensure proper coverage. Even the most brilliant studies are pale and dull before being fired.

6 Firing the Tiles

blast into the air and move into the bin. During the 3-hour firing time, bins feature an evenly constant temperature level. Even slight fluctuations could ruin the glass, warp the tiles, or cause them to shatter. And the cooling process is almost as important as the baking: the staff adjust the openings on the dampers and may apply heat if the temperature isn't just right. Given after thickets open and firing is complete, the melt-anamorphosis continues. Red tiles, for instance, look black, but brighter as they are exposed to air.





7—Sorting by Color

A kiln technician pushes cooled tiles onto a sorting cart, on which they'll be compared against display samples of esoteric color variations. Each shade is given a rating from one to five, with one being a glow in which all the tiles are totally similar and five being a flash with more variation. The easier visible green glass makes three sub-batches, for instance: "Is a batch of Meadow Green, which is a five, as expected to see all the color variations in a mistake?" says Health tile manager Eric Gault.

8—Installing the Tile

Sheets of Argyle mosaic tiles (seen being made in step 10) went up a day behind the cockpit at Doby and Chris Schetz's home in Mill Valley, California. The couple had chosen stainless steel for the wall but changed their minds after seeing—and feeling—the tiles at Heath's factory store. "Not only do you get the mosaic pattern, but you get different surface textures," says Doby, who also likes the way the varying greens echo the colors in their woods and recycled glass countertop. Grouted and sealed, the tiles' handcrafted look and tapered glass pattern turn what might have been a too-humdrum backsplash into a uniquely functional focal point.



Save Money With Seconds

Creative ways to achieve first-quality results using inexpensive, not quite-perfect tiles



Buying tip: Heath tile manager Eric Gault recommends buying 20 percent more "seconds" than you need to compensate for irregularities or mis-

matches. Heath doesn't ship them, you make your selections in person and ship them home. Order sets, the makers offer similar deals. Mosaicwall.com (ask through second at MosaicTile.com) in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Thomas (jordan.com) welcomes visitors to its factory in Kew, New Hampshire. Here are some tips for working with seconds.

- **MATCHING SHADES OF THE SAME COLOR:** As a complementary way of different colors. Or by blending your looking diamond and how to shape for a mixed result.
- **SCATTER ONE OR MORE COLORS:** Among a solid field of another hue randomly or at consistently spaced intervals. San Francisco architect David Baker recommends first laying out your wall tiles on the floor to work out the pattern.
- **USE TILES WITH UNIFORM SURFACES FOR CUTS,** or seek a high-gloss or a flatter-mat layer to smooth the inconsistency.
- **HAVE A TRIM PLAN:** Because many fewer trim pieces are made than field tiles, it's rare to find enough borders among seconds to finish an edge. Some solutions: Finish off with wood trim or have a seamless steel/brass fabricated frame with mosaic tile with angle iron screwed into the wall and embedded in the grout. Brush on a matching stain along the exposed, unglazed tile edges.



WORKSHOP

TECHNIQUES, TIPS, AND YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



A few "finished" scrapers plane outboard a wreath made of delicate shavings and pine shavings.

- 57 Ask This Old House
- 100 Norm's Notebook
Power-tool maintenance
- 101 Resource Directory

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW BUCKALE

NEW: In the Olive Oil Section!



Pour on the Health

HEART SHAPE[™] FLAX OIL

Families Need Omega-3

The typical American diet is deficient in omega-3s that support cardiovascular health. Now, the easiest way to add omega-3s to your family diet is to start using Heart Shape Flax Oil.*

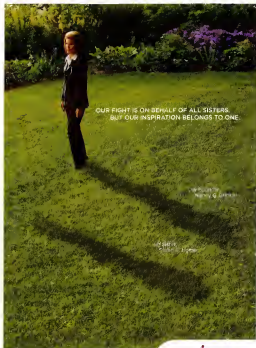
Try Flax Oil: #1 in Omega-3

Heart Shape Flax Oil is nature's richest source of plant-based omega-3 ALA. Just use Heart Shape Flax Oil and Flax Oil Blends where you'd normally use olive, sunflower or canola oil. It's the easiest way to add omega-3!

Look for Flax in
the Olive Oil section.

Try all 3 Heart Shape Flax Oils & Blends
Flax Oil • Flax Sunflower • Flax Olive Sunflower
Get recipes and health information at ShapeFoods.com





OUR FIGHT IS ON BEHALF OF ALL SISTERS.
BUT OUR INSPIRATION BELONGS TO ONE.

the founder
Nancy G. Blinker

and her
Susan G. Komen

Years ago, Nancy G. Blinker made her dying sister a promise: to do everything in her power to end breast cancer forever. In 1962, that promise became Susan G. Komen for the Cure. For more information about Komen for the Cure's mission to end breast cancer forever, visit komen.org or call 1-877-GO KOMEN.

This event is presented as a public service. ©2008 Susan G. Komen for the Cure®



We're on a mission.



a lasting memory is your best

mementoKEMO

Some snow is made for pecking. Okemo snow is made for bonding. With our award-winning family programs and more on- and off-snow activities, Okemo provides your family countless ways to connect. *USA Magazine Top 5 in North America for Family Programs*

okemo.com | 1-800-78-OKEMO | Ledlow, Vermont

OKEMO
OF The art of FAMILY



THE BEST OF ITALY, In Stamford!



Il Falco
RISTORANTE

Indulge your craving for traditional Italian cuisine at Il Falco Ristorante, conveniently located in the heart of downtown Stamford. Enjoy an elegant dining experience in a relaxed atmosphere, and delight in the area's most extensive wine list to accompany your meal. Serving lunch and dinner daily. Private dining available for corporate and social events.

Reservations: 203 327-0002
59 Broad Street • Stamford, CT

Angelo's printing in print please! Inc.

Visit www.ilfalco.com for directions and other information.

Ask This Old House

NEED AN EXPERT? WE'VE GOT FIVE. READY TO ANSWER YOUR HOME QUESTIONS?



TOM RAHN
2008 EPA ENERGY STAR EXPERT



NORM ABRAM
2008 EPA ENERGY STAR EXPERT



RICHARD TELLEFSEN
2008 EPA ENERGY STAR EXPERT



ANGIE ASCHMANN
2008 EPA ENERGY STAR EXPERT



DAVID GREEN
2008 EPA ENERGY STAR EXPERT



THERMOSTAT WARS

Every heating season, my husband says we should we keep our forced-air heating system at the same setting all the time. I say it's better to lower the temperature at night and when we're not home. Who's right?

MONICA SMITH, JEFFERSON, IL



Richard Tellefsen, 2008 EPA Energy Star Expert, says that if you want to save energy, you should set your thermostat to 68°F when you're home and 62°F when you're not.

Richard Tellefsen replies: It's not easy acting in the sphere of these natural disputes, someone always ends up being upset. But in this case, I'm happy to say that you're both right.

A heating system does have to work hard, or in losing a house up to temperature that it does to maintain a steady temperature. But you begin to reap savings when your house reaches that lower setback temperature and stays there for a while, such as when you're sleeping at night or on vacation.

Just how much you'll save depends on the kind of heating system you have, how tightly insulated your house is, and how long the setback lasts. But according to the Alliance to Save Energy, a nonprofit group that promotes energy efficiency, lowering the temperature and leaving it there for 4 hours a day can save you up to 10 percent on your heating costs. Suffice it to say that the more hours your house stays at that lower temperature, the less fuel you'll use.

So on your self-appointed weekend retreat, I ask you to refrain from using the remote to lower the thermostat and say instead, "Honey, let's switch to savings mode."

Q Getting a Fair Price

I had a contractor give me an estimate on a remodeling project. How do I know if his estimate is a fair one? Are there any books I can check?

MARJORIE GAGE, JEFFERSON, MO

Norm Abram replies: Contractors will often use cost-estimating books as a starting point to develop a bid, but I don't think you'd have



ASK THE EXPERTS

Everything you wanted to know about programmable thermostats but were afraid to ask.

The word programmable sends shivers down most of our spines. It shouldn't, especially when it comes to the programmable thermostat. In fact, it's easy and it can make your home more comfortable. Here's how.

They are more convenient and accurate than manual thermostats and improve your home's comfort.



They'll save energy and save you money on utility bills—up to \$150 when used properly.

They're better for the environment, since using less energy helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

If you need more information or reasons to buy a programmable thermostat, visit carrier.com or call 1-800-CARRIER and talk to an expert.

Carrier

Turn to the Experts

WOODWORK Ask This Old House

wood back using them to second-guess your bids. For one thing, the numbers on these books list "typical" wages or "average" cost per square foot or "estimated" material prices that probably don't reflect your contractor's actual costs. Also, the time lag between data collection and publication almost guarantees that some numbers will be obsolete. Besides, a contractor's charges may reflect factors that aren't in a book, and asking how busy he is at the moment, what time of year it is, and how urgently you want him to get started.

The last way to get a fair price is to get estimates from several competent contractors who have experience doing the kind of project you want and can provide good references to prove it. If one bid is substantially higher or lower than the others, it's a red flag that should prompt you to ask, "Why?" But if the bids are similar and you're not sure why, as a general rule, the more local work a contractor has and the more quality of materials, choose the contractor you think you'll work with the best.

Q Furry this in Winter

Last spring, my forsythia bush bloomed on the bottom but not the top. Could it be that I pruned the bush the wrong way or at the wrong time? WASHINGTON, D.C. STEVEN ISLAND HO

Roger Cook replies: It's unlikely you did anything wrong, I blame the weather before the spring thaw. Last winter started out mild in the Northeast, then went into a deep freeze. The ground froze solid, and cold winds dried out and damaged many plants. I replaced hundreds of them last spring.



The lower part of this forsythia bush survived the winter because it was protected from cold winds.

I'll bet that your forsythia had some lower pruned up around its base, protecting it from the cold. That could explain why the lower branches flowered and the top ones didn't.

The good thing about forsythia is that they are very vigorous plants. Prune out the dead material, cut the plant back so that it looks as good as possible, and give it a good drink before the ground freezes. Whip it loosely with burlap so that none of it doesn't freeze this winter. Then, early next spring, saw up it, fertilize it lightly, and watch it take off.

Q Insulating Above a Suspended Ceiling

I have two rooms that tend to be a little cold in the winter, but both have suspended ceilings a foot below the original ones. Could I have insulation on top of the existing panels to help warm them up? CHICAGO, ILL. NORTHAMORE, ILL.



Tony Stone replies: I wouldn't do it. Blowing insulation into a space like that would create a real mess. And if you use spray-on foam to try to lift up one of the ceiling panels to get access to the original ceiling in order to, say, fix some plumbing—well, it would be like opening the hatch of a submarine while still underwater.

Paper- or foil-faced batt insulation is a better bet. Unless you encounter air ducts or drain pipes, you should have more than enough clearance for 8-inch-thick batts. But first, check with the company that made the ceiling panels to be sure they'll support the insulation. Fiberglass panels aren't strong enough, wood-and-metal-or-foil panels should be at least 3/4 inch thick. You'll also have to beef up the grid that the panels rest on by adding a new hanger wire between each existing pair of wires supporting the grid's long "beams."

Place each batt between the beams so it's against its neighboring batts, with its facing down. You might want to temporarily remove some or all of the ceiling—do pieces of the grid between the beams—to give yourself some elbow room. Don't take down the ceiling panels, just push them up and slide them out now. Once a batt is in place, hold it up with one hand as you slide each ceiling panel back into place with the other. One more thing: If there are any light fixtures or hanger boxes above the ceiling panels, keep the insulation at least 3 inches away from them unless they're rated for contact with insulation.

Q Snapping Bay Window

Nearly 20 years ago, one of our standard windows was replaced with a 7-foot wide-bay window. Now it's old and sagging and the windows don't seal as well as they once did. Can I fix this by removing the roof and rehanging it? HOWARD BEHND, HUNTSVILLE, AL.

Tim Stone replies: Rehanging the roof is probably necessary, but it won't fix the problem. You actually need to provide more support for your window. The less alternative way to do this is to add structural steel cables. I've successfully used a system from Andersen Windows that will work on most bay windows.

First, remove the bay's roof—including the rafters—and do made sure at both of the bay's outer corners. Then push the bay back into position on the outside using a hydraulic jack. I like to push the outermost pane a little higher than level to allow for some settling. Now you can string the cable assembly from the floor of the bay, up through the corners, and to a shackle above the bay. When the cables are in place, retighten the rods, remove the jacks, and replace the trim. The bay's windows should work just fine.

Q Removing Stains From a Cast-Iron Sink

We have an old cast-iron farmhouse sink that we'd like to mount in our kitchen remodel. It's in good shape, with no leaks or warbles, but there are some stains that we'd like to remove. Any suggestions? CHICAGO, ILL. STEVEN, ILL.



Tim Stone tightens the steel cables holding up one corner of a bay window.

Kyle O'Connell replies: Everyone I've talked to about cast-iron sinks—including my work colleagues and manufacturers—agrees on one thing: Start out with a cast-iron sink problem that won't scratch the surface of the sink.

Michelle Meyerhoff at Kohler Co., which makes cast-iron sinks, recommends her company's Cast-Iron Sink Cleaner, a non-abrasive stain remover that contains wax. Other non-abrasive cleaners, such as Soft Scrub Gel and Zud cleaner, also work well on stains, she says. But the wax in the Kohler product puts back some of the sheen and helps prevent subsequent staining. Plus, you can make it into a paste to leave on tough stains overnight.

If that doesn't do the job, Meyerhoff says a mild abrasive, such as the Kasper Powder, should be the next step. It contains cerium and used a scouring agent, a combination that works well on cast iron.

online house

Search to refresh weekly content and view forum at housewire.com

Send your questions to Ask This Old House

go to www.thisoldhouse.com/asktho
or write to Ask This Old House
This Old House magazine
335 West 57th Street
New York, NY 10019

Include a complete address and daytime phone number. Publishers cannot be held responsible for delays and may forward a reference. We regret that, due to the volume of mail received, we cannot always respond to all questions.

Skip the Trip to Home Stores.



www.pexsupply.com

- Save Time
- Save Gas
- Save Cash

Plumbing & Heating Supplies

My dream closet is

Exposure with plenty

of Drawers

and Slanted Shoe Shelves

It would also have

Sealed Metal Handles

and Crown Molding

Design and customize
your dream closet now
at EasyClosets.com
for 40-60% off typical
installed prices.



EasyClosets
Design to Install Easy Closets

www.EasyClosets.com 1-800-970-0001



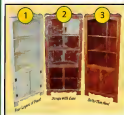
SOY-Gel™

Professional Paint & Urethane Remover
Lead-based Paint, Varnishes & Urethanes

100% Biodegradable • Non-Corrosive & Non-Hazardous
Virtually No Odor • Made With 100% American Grown Soybeans

Removes Multiple Layers

"SoyGel™ is the best stripper I have ever used!
It made restoring my Grandmother's cabinet a
breeze - I'm actually looking forward to my next project!"
- Nancy M.



FRANMAR
Chemicals

Call Today or Shop-Online!
1-800-538-5669 • www.franmar.com

**We make
installing a spiral
straightforward.**



Metal Spirals
from
\$495

Features:
• Most Construction
Activities & Rain
• All Components Made
• Mounts to Wall & Y-Box

Options:
• All Finishes • Free Design
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box

Out Spirals
from
\$2850

Features:
• All Steel Construction
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box

Options:
• All Finishes • Free Design
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box

Wetmore Dorr®
from
\$4500

Features:
• All Steel Construction
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box

Options:
• All Finishes • Free Design
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box
• Mounting to Wall or Y-Box

The best selection, quality, and prices!

Since 1991, The Iron Shop has enjoyed a reputation for outstanding design and fabrication of spiral stairs. Today, we utilize computer-aided technology throughout our production process, successfully creating some of the art manufacturing with Old World quality. Offering the largest selection, highest quality, and lowest prices in spiral stairs—we make sure you get the right spiral to meet your needs. And our spirals are all made with pride in the U.S.A.

Call for the **FREE** color Catalog & Price List:
1-800-523-7427 Ask for Ext. TDN
or visit our Web Site at www.TheIronShop.com/TDN

Web Plant & Showroom: Over 100,000 Sq. Ft. • 400 West Main • Ste. 100 • 1000
Birmingham, Alabama 35202 • Tel: 205-944-1111 • Fax: 205-944-1111 • E-Mail: info@TheIronShop.com

THE IRON SHOP®

The Leading Manufacturer of Spiral Stairs®



OUR BRIGHTEST IDEAS ARE NOTHING NEW.

Authentic period
hardware and
lighting for
your home.

Expert
assistance
for your
peace of
mind.

Save 15% on your next order.
Promo code: TOH
www.HOAH.biz (877) 223-2680

H HOUSE OF ANTIQUE HARDWARE

EXTERIOR SHUTTERS & SHUTTER HARDWARE

Give your heirs
one more thing
TO SQUABBLE OVER.



Historically accurate, custom handcrafted
shutters from Timberline®. Available in
traditional wood or maintenance-
free Enduram®. Call today for
your complimentary Timberline
catalog.

500-250-2222 EXT. 1001
TIMBERLINE.COM/1001

©2002 Timberline, Inc. All rights reserved. All other marks & logos are the property of their respective owners.

Two Special Offers

Digital Angle Finder

99W63.05

\$24.50

- Stainless-steel blade
- Aluminum body
- Locking thumb screw
- Zero setting button
- LCD display
- Level nail



To order these specials, or to request
our free 276-page woodworking tools
catalog, call or visit us online.

Shipping and handling fees extra.

Tabletop Magnifying Lamp 17J30.15



- Distortion-free optical-grade 3-diopter lens
- Fluorescent bulb provides soft illumination
- Lamp head swivels and pivots
- Dual electronic ballast
- UL/CUL approved

\$22.50



Lee Valley & veritas®

1-800-683-8170 www.leevalley.com

65,000+ Decorative Building Products

Lowest Prices • Widest Selection • All From Stock!



**Decorative Products
by OUTWATER**

Free 1600+ Page Catalog!
1-888-773-1408 1-800-633-4408
www.Outwater.net

From Rustic Cabins to Custom-Designed Homes...



Any Home Can be a Log Home

The Nation's leader in quality log-cabin-grade
Log Siding & Shanty Pine Fencing.

Great For: New or Existing Homes • Basements • Dens • Bar Rooms
Kitchens • Bars • Studios • Garages • Out Buildings • Cottages

Customer
Satisfaction...



We Guarantee It!

THE WOODWORKERS SHOPPE

Shanty Wood® brand of log home products are available at the
Woodworkers Shoppe in Canaan, Michigan. We Ship Nationwide!

Call (800) 818-9971 • woodworkersshoppe.com



THE PERFECT ALTERNATIVE
TO

WOLLY NECKTIES, boring socks, USELESS GADGETS
on Angelfire's second birthday season

Original
The Grill Pad®

WHAT'S UNDER YOUR GRILL?

Grilling season is right around the corner...it's time to get rid of that old
socks. Protect and preserve your expensive deck and patio from spills,
drips and grease with the "Grill Pad" certified The "Grill Pad" Grill Pad
is a durable, portable, lightweight, tear resistant and heat shield worthy
underneath your grill to prevent it from... See more information visit
www.grillpad.com and more to complement any outdoor space.

WWW.GRILLPAD.COM 866.474.2672



See Inside
The Original Grill Pad **COLLECTIBLE EDITION**



**We're so obsessed with performance even the
air conditioner is timed with a stopwatch.**

The Nissan Altima

Over 5,000 quality and durability tests to help make sure every part lasts.

In the desert, the most important part of a car is a well-functioning air conditioner. That's why we speed test the Altima's cool-down time in places where the cabin temperature can reach 140°. Incidentally, the heater gets the same workout - in Fairbanks, Alaska. The Nissan Altima. Made to drive. Built to last. For more information, you can visit us at [**NissanUSA.com**](http://NissanUSA.com).



SHIFT_durability